

LONDON THE READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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No. 943.—VOL. XXXVII.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING MAY 28, 1881.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[A WOMAN'S WILL.]

LINK BY LINK.

BY

A POPULAR AUTHOR.

CHAPTER X.

Now look you, sir,
My way is yours; for all that I propose
Is for your interest and lasting good.
I seek the shadow. You the substance hold
If you consent.

"I ASK it as a favour, Maria," says Sir Marmaduke, faintly.

He is lying back inert and strengthless in his commodious easy chair, and Crimp, the valet, is altering the disposition of the soft cushions which support his head. Lady Knollys, erect and stately, the superfluous drapery of a riding-habit thrown over her arm, and an expression of haughty displeasure upon her leaden features, stands watching the proceeding, drawing on her gloves the while.

To some of us who are not wholly strangers to similar seasons of physical prostration, and who remember that only the tender fingers of the woman who loves us best availed to soothe the uneasy pillow, the simple scene may have a curious significance.

There are three people in the room in addition to this titled invalid. Does it occur to any one of them, I wonder, that it is just a little odd a hireling should shift the cushions whilst wife and son look on?

"It is a favour which I decline to concede,"

answers my lady, with cold decision. "It is one thing to take a stranger up in these rural districts, but quite another thing to put him down again when he has served one's turn. Once for all, Sir Marmaduke, let it be distinctly understood that I refuse to know your protégé."

"No protégé of mine, as you are well aware," mutters the baronet.

"That I refuse to know Mr. Colin Cathcart, then. I cannot prevent you from inviting people of—of that class to luncheon, but I can decline to sit at table with them."

"Pole-Gell said he was an Oxford man."

"What of that? The son of every little tradesman who scrapes together a thousand pounds goes to college in these levelling days. I should say that this Mr. Cathcart is—"

"A howling cad," interposes Chandos Knollys, with unusual emphasis.

"People who live in glass houses should not throw stones," growls the baronet, wrathfully. "I have not yet seen Mr. Cathcart, but even howling caddishness—whatever that may be—can hardly prove more objectionable than vulgarity intensified, not disguised, by the airs and graces of a fop and the cheap cynicism of a would-be man of the world."

"Ma mère," says the young man, turning with a supercilious elevation of the eyebrows to his mother—"ma mère, I think a storm is brewing. We had better start for our ride before it bursts."

"What time will you return?" asks Sir Marmaduke.

"About the time, sir, that you begin to do the honours of the table to your plebeian friend."

"You at all events will join us?"

"Bien obligé. To borrow the emphatic and

euphonious negative of Mr. Cathcart's sphere in life, 'Not if I know it.'"

"I cannot understand your desire to cultivate him," says my lady, frigidly.

"A means to an end. I want an alteration in the course of the projected railway, and my only chance of getting it is to win over this engineer, and through him to influence the higher officials."

"Still less can I enter into such a wish. What can be your motive?"

"My motives do not admit of argument."

"Nor does my refusal to receive this person at luncheon. Chandos, I am ready."

They go out, mother and son, to take their pleasure in the sweet air and the radiant sunshine, and Sir Marmaduke sinks back amongst his pillows with a stifled execration. His blood-shot eyes glare wrathfully at the valet, following every noiseless movement in hope to find some pretext for a querulous outburst.

But Mr. Crimp's practised celerity baffles the amiable intention, and presently he too retires. Then the anger dies away, and in its place comes a look, so sad, so weary, so despondent, that Sir Marmaduke Knollys's worst enemy—and Heaven knows a fierce temper and unruly passions have won for him hatred enough—might almost pity him now.

Wearily, wearily he contemplates the clear outlines of the distant hills, the deep blue and the fleecy white of an almost Italian sky, the gorgeous colouring of the geometrical flowerbeds, the movements of gardeners who are preparing to water them.

It is not with these things his thoughts are busy. He is reviewing his past life, the violence and the selfishness of it, the wrongs he has done

which can never be righted, the sorrows he has caused which can never be healed, the mistakes he has made which can never be repaired.

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities—all is vanity." That moan of the kingly roused, which has come down to us through three thousand years, is the moan of this gouty English baronet. "Vanity and vexation of spirit. All is vanity."

He has sown the wind, and now he is reaping the whirlwind. All his life he has given his body to self-indulgence, and now, whilst he is yet in years a middle-aged man, it has become a temple of pain. All his life he has selfishly sought his own pleasure, his own gratification, at any cost to other people, and now he must content himself with such ministrations as money can purchase, and expect nothing from filial duty or from wifely love.

Colin Cathcart's first impression as he enters the room two hours later is a mournful one. As he strolled leisurely up the avenue he confessed to a feeling of complacent elation at the nature of his mission. Utterly devoid of the snobbishness which covets a seat upon any terms above the salt or below it at a great man's table, he is yet gratified to know that a report must have gone abroad of so favourable a nature as to incline Sir Marmaduke to approach a matter of business through the courtesies of hospitality.

He appreciates the immensity of the gulf which to the Loamshire mind exists between his own undefined social position as a railway engineer and the established importance of the county magnate. The gulf may be imaginary, but Colin is sure that to the magnate it is very real; yet Sir Marmaduke has paid him the compliment of ignoring it.

On his way hither, looking to right and left, over meadow, wood and farm, it was borne in upon him that after all the Loamshire estimate is correct, and the lord of so much soil is in truth a highly exalted personage.

He envied him with that harmless envy which has nothing in common with covetousness, and behold—a bloated invalid in a padded chair, who wears upon his swollen features the most miserable expression of sorrowful despondency that Colin has ever seen.

It vanishes, however, at the announcement of the visitor's name. The heavy eyelids lift—into the bloodshot eyes comes a look of semi-recognition.

"You must forgive me for not rising to receive you, Mr. Cathcart," says the baronet, with easy politeness, extending his strong white hand in greeting. "I thought we were strangers, but your face is not unfamiliar."

"It excited violent indignation a month ago by an intrusion upon your privacy," answers the young man, with a smile.

"Bless my soul, I remember," cries Sir Marmaduke. "I had been annoyed a day or two before by a vagabond who marched into the garden yonder, and oddly gathered a handful of flowers before my very eyes. You must make allowances for a sick man's infirmities of temper. Who was your companion?"

"Mr. Hornblower, the chairman of the new line."

"And your errand?"

"That which brings me here to-day. Being in the neighbourhood he thought it would be an act of courtesy to ascertain personally your objection to the route mapped out by our surveyor."

"I am sorry his courtesy met with so poor a return," answers Sir Marmaduke, with grievous irritation in his tones. "I suppose you did not ask to see me after the rough reception I gave you from a distance?"

"On the contrary, we requested an interview, but it was refused."

"By whom? If you will ring that bell, Mr. Cathcart, I will parade the rogue, and teach him a lesson he will not forget in a hurry."

"The request was addressed to your wife and son, Sir Marmaduke."

"Then my wife and son ought to be ashamed of themselves," is the wrathful rejoinder.

"Accept my apologies if you can, and let us discuss a more pleasant subject. So you have

been a month in Astonburne? How do you like the neighbourhood? Have you got to know many people yet?"

"Only the doctor and the rector."

"I should have called upon you ere this if Doctor Gwynne's despotism were a shade less absolute, but I am not allowed to stir out of doors," says the baronet, with marked urbanity; and Colin listens, well pleased.

Human nature is ever amenable to delicate flattery, and the great man's graciousness is producing the effect upon which he calculates. But for all that Colin Cathcart is asking, not cynically, but with shrewd common sense, to what end his companion is taking such pains to make himself agreeable.

The end is as yet carefully concealed. Crimp, the valet, appears to announce that luncheon is served, and to wheel his master into the adjoining apartment. There is a more dazzling show of silver upon the table, a more impressive display of liveried servants than is necessary or in quite good taste for a quiet meal of two. The table is loaded with such luxuries as wealth alone can command; the wines are simply perfect.

"I am sorry my wife and son could not join us. They are making a round of calls; I must introduce you next time," says Sir Marmaduke, and Colin, recalling early impressions, decides that the proposed introduction is one with which he can gladly dispense.

But he makes a suitable response, and the stream of amicable conversation flows on.

"I am told," he says, "that Mr. Chandos Knollys will come of age in a week or two."

"Yes, there will be great rejoicings," "Le roi est mort—vive le roi," answers Sir Marmaduke, grimly. "It is not always so pleasant as it looks, Mr. Cathcart, to be 'le roi.' One gets a notion that the heir-apparent is casting longing glances at the throne."

"It is impossible that any son should desire to depose his father; such an idea is the morbid fancy of an invalid," cries the young man, earnestly; and for a moment his companion looks at the bright, frank face wistfully, and with real, not simulated, kindness.

Sir Marmaduke Knollys is wondering whether the future would be quite so black, whether the slow journey to the grave would be quite so hopeless and full of pain if Providence had given him instead of the heir-apparent such a son as this.

"There will be feasting and dancing—a gala day for all the country round," he says, wearily. "I need not specially invite you to the festivities, for open house will be kept; but if you can throw your energies into the sports and help to make the thing a success you will earn my gratitude."

"I shall be only too pleased. It will be something to look forward to."

"I daresay your leisure time hangs wearily. Do you fish?"

"Not in streams that are strictly preserved," answers Colin, with a merry laugh, and the baronet laughs also, joylessly.

"That is Chandos's doing. I shall have pleasure in thinking, Mr. Cathcart, that the prohibition does not apply to you. The brook used to be famous for trout, and I do not suppose rigid preserving has disimproved it. You are at liberty to fish in my water without reservation."

"You are indeed kind," exclaims Colin, gratefully.

"Not at all. It is to my interest to be civil to any representative of the Braxton, Duffpool, Hollowbridge, and Astonburne Direct Railway, seeing that an infamous Act of Parliament has given them the power to run their line through my estate."

"You cannot deny that they offer liberal compensation."

"I do not attempt to deny it," says Sir Marmaduke, impatiently.

"Or shut your eyes to the fact that a railway enhances the value of the ground in its vicinity."

"Great Heaven! what a world of hucksters we live in," cries the baronet, with humorous irritability. "Surely you are not yet so pene-

trated with the spirit of the age you cannot understand that a sentiment—a prejudice, if you will—has more weight with me than filthy lucre. I know the objection is old-fashioned and out of date, but I hate the idea of parting with a rood of the land which I hold in trust from my ancestors, to be handed intact to my heir. There is a route through Joyce's Farm which the line might take with equal advantage. It would put money he badly needs into the poor fellow's pocket, and I should be delighted to miss my golden opportunity; so delighted, in fact, that I would write a cheque for five hundred pounds this instant if you could influence the decision I desire."

He leans back, toying in affected carelessness with a golden toothpick, but his bloodshot eyes do not leave his companion's face. With eager, crafty scrutiny they are seeking to interpret the sudden flush which has overspread it. The sentence was either a mere figure of speech, or the imperfectly formulated proposal of a bribe; the development of it depends upon the reception.

"I have no influence," answers Colin, with cold hauteur. "If I possessed any I should use it as might best promote the interests of the company whose servant I have the honour to be."

"Of course, of course. I am merely labouring to convince you that my interests, which are sentimental, and those of the company, which are pecuniary, do not clash."

"I quite believe it," assents Colin, with warmth, which seeks to make amends for his hasty suspicion. "To speak quite candidly, Sir Marmaduke, I see no obstacle to the carrying out of your wishes save Mr. Hornblower's vivid recollection of his reception here a month ago and the indignation which those reminiscences inspire."

"Then will you act as my ambassador to Mr. Hornblower? Tell him I am repenting in sackcloth and ashes. Say that a penitent baronet ardently desires reconciliation. In short, Mr. Cathcart, bestir me in this matter so far as your strong sense of duty and your official seal will permit and you will earn my lasting gratitude."

"It is a pleasant prospect. I will do my very best," answers the young man, rising; and so the interview ends.

CHAPTER XI.

The merry contest, and the friendly strife,
The mimic warfare, the hard knocks rendered
In playful sport—add zest to rural life,
This croquet in a game unprecedented.

"I AM so glad you have dropped in. Mr. Cathcart is here, and now we shall be able to manage a four game of croquet."

The speaker is Mrs. Gwynne, an energetic lady, with a fixed idea. The alliterative and stereotyped description—"fair, fat, and forty"—suits her well enough, but it must be amplified extensively before it can be made to convey the faintest conception of her excessive plumpness, vivacity, and good-humour. Her fixed idea is—croquet.

Smile at it, oh, ye tennis players, light of frame and agile of movement, who banished to the nursery long ago the ancient box of gaudy mallets and battered balls, that purphance it might amuse the children upon rainy days.

Croquet lingers yet in many a quiet village, the staple summer amusement of portly matrons who won their lords by the help of it in the days when two clasped hands would almost have spanned their dainty waists, and when the tightness of Lilliputian boots peeping out from Brobdignagian balloon-shaped crinolines laid the foundations of the bunions of to-day.

Miss Pole-Gell, who plays tennis, with the dexterity of a professional gymnast when a game is proposed at The Hall or elsewhere, does not appear to find Mrs. Gwynne's suggestion ridiculous. Very faint and speedily overruled is her murmured protest that she ought, she really ought, to hurry home to pour out papa's tea. The doctor's

wife wastes no words upon it, but proceeds at once to the arrangement of the game.

"Mr. Cathcart shall be my partner, and dad shall be yours," she cries.

"Dad is in luck's way," says the doctor. "Cathcart, you will find Miss Pole-Gell a foe-woman worthy of your steel. I am quite content."

"And I. The game will teach me the first principles of Christianity," retorts the young man.

Miss Pole-Gell revolves that enigmatical speech until a text about "loving one's enemies" flashes into her mind, and she blushes to find herself wondering whether she has found the clue.

Oh! the doctor's croquet-ground is a pleasant lounging place this hot July afternoon. It is so pleasant to work one's wicked will upon the adversary's ball and send it skimming away beyond the grateful shadow of the huge beech, whilst great, grey eyes flash with mock indignation, and red, pouting lips part to give utterance to terrible threats of reprisal.

It is so pleasant to throw one's whole soul into the pastime, as these simple, unsophisticated players contrive to do, fighting always, with perfect friendliness, yet striving for the victory as though a kingdom were at stake.

It is so pleasant when the game is over to sink into a lounging-chair, or stretch one's self upon the cool grass, to banter the vanquished, to receive from a rosy-cheeked handmaiden cups of fragrant tea, slices of yellow cake, plates of strawberries, soaked in such cream as we never see in towns.

But, alas! all pleasant experiences are miserably evanescent. For the last half-hour Miss Pole-Gell has vainly attempted to stifle qualms of conscience, and now she rises with a regretful sigh.

"How I shall make my peace with papa. I cannot tell," she says. "He will be imagining that all kinds of evil have befallen me. I must really go now."

"Let me escort you to The Rectory gates," cries Colin, rising also.

And Miss Pole-Gell receives the proposition with the silence which gives consent. In truth, she has that to say which cannot be spoken before the doctor and his wife.

She feels rather conscious as she walks down the straggling street by his side. It was delightful to play croquet with Colin Cathcart under the ægis of Mrs. Gwynne's chaperonage, but this public companionship with a young man who has "summit to do with the railway" is less charming.

Village tongues do wag so mercilessly. They have wagged before often enough, connecting her name with that of "Muster Chandos," and speaking of a closer alliance between The Hall and The Rectory, as a probable contingency; but that was a different matter.

Not altogether free from the leaven of pride is the rector's daughter. The greatest man in her circle is Sir Marmaduke Knollys, Bart., and the possibility (so remote that its advantages and disadvantages needed not to be weighed very accurately) of one day becoming Lady Knollys was not without its charm. The cases are in no respect parallel.

Then she puts the feeling from her, impatient of its littleness. Involuntarily she compares the faultlessly-dressed exquisite, with his eye-glasses, his superciliousness, his rapid, would-be cynicism, with the frank young Saxon by her side.

Whose admiration honours her most, that of the dandy, or that of the man? Can want of noble lineage or a stain upon his escutcheon render Colin Cathcart other than the courteous, high-minded gentleman, whose kindness, forbearance and confidence made her pledge herself, unsolicited, to assist him to dispel the cloud of doubt which shrouds his parentage?

They are abreast of the "Knollys Arms," and Rex comes trotting out to greet his master.

"Will you accept additional protection from a 'huge, ugly, beast?'" asks Colin, with a smile.

"Do you never forget? Rex has forgotten

and forgiven, have you not, good dog?" cries the girl, patting the noble head.

And the Newfoundland's eyes answer lovingly.

"How is your mission progressing?" she continues.

"The railway?"

"No, the search for evidence of your mother's identity. Have you yet forged another link of the chain?"

"I have tried to do so, but all my efforts have failed. Three times during the last month I have thought myself upon the right track, but each investigation has led to nothing. I am convinced that Miss Wraxall might help me, but I cannot obtain speech with her. I never realised before how true it is that an Englishwoman's house is her castle."

"Shall I help you?" says Miss Pole-Gell, gleefully.

"If you can, and will."

"It occurred to me yesterday," continues the girl, "that an old family servant who married a small farmer and lives three miles away might elucidate the mystery. I drove over to see her—not Jehu-fashion this time—with Uncle John's ponies and the renovated basket-carriage. She is a person whose conversation flows like a stream of water from a barrel. You turn on the tap by mentioning any subject, and the talk runs until you turn it off by mentioning another. I set her going upon the dressmakers of four or five and twenty years ago."

"And the result?"

"She began to speak of the young woman who made mamma's wedding-dress, and who disappeared a month or two afterwards in company, it was supposed, with a miner who had been paying his addresses to her. The young woman was in the employment of Miss Wraxall, who was reputed at the time to know more about the affair than she cared to reveal. A year or so later Miss Wraxall bought the cottage in which she now lives, retired from business, and began to develop the eccentricities of behaviour which have earned her the fame of a witch."

"What was the young woman's name?" asks Colin, eagerly.

"Selina Harvey."

"Her description?"

"It answers in every particular that you gave me of your mother."

"And the miner's name?"

"I am not sure. She thought it was Simm or Simms. You will come in, will you not?"

In silent meditation Colin follows her through the wicket gate which leads to The Rectory, and Rex, after a look of inquiry, brings up the rear, wondering in his doggish mind, perhaps, at his master's abstraction.

"The Rev. Pole-Gell is not at home. He was not surprised that Miss May stayed tea with Mrs. Gwynne. He has gone out to visit a sick parishioner."

So says the housekeeper in answer to inquiries, and Miss May finds that she must do the honours singlehanded.

It is no great hardship, perhaps. They go into that room in which Colin found her on his first visit, and they sit down on either side of the windows open to the ground. Without, the fountain is babbling strange and eloquent things in an unknown tongue, and Rex stretches himself upon the soft turf of the lawn to wait and listen. Within, the silence, the sweet sense of stolen companionship, and of being all alone in a little paradise of their own, discourse strange and eloquent things likewise. For a few seconds a spell seems to have fallen on them both. Miss Pole-Gell makes a conversational plunge and breaks it.

"I hear that you lunched at The Hall the other morning?"

"Yes. I had matters of business to discuss with Sir Marmaduke. He was very polite and kind to me."

"Only think. It might turn out that you are the son of as great a man as he. Your present situation is something like that of a lottery ticket-holder. Suppose you were to draw such a prize?"

"I should not be greatly elated," answers Colin.

"It is a proud position," says the girl, wonderingly.

"Is it?" asks the young man, with a smile. "What is there worshipful in it, Miss Pole-Gell? Are we to bow the knee to the golden calf of riches, or to the rank he inherited from his forefathers, but has done nothing to deserve? I am not sure but I would rather be Prometheus Hornblower, the self-made man, than Sir Marmaduke Knollys, Bart."

She looks at him incredulously. All her life May Pole-Gell, boasting herself the bluest blood in Leamshire, has been trained to respect lineage and rank until her veneration for them almost amounts to a religion.

"And of this I am sure," he continues, with increasing earnestness. "I will render to your county Caesar the things which are Caesar's. I will admit his sovereignty in the narrow world of Astonburne, but there is a great world beyond in which even our friend Prometheus might aspire to higher rank. Think of the names which have come to the fore in science. Take my own profession if you will. See how it bridges an ocean, tunnels beneath a sea, cuts asunder the two halves of a continent. I had rather be M. De Lesseps than a crowned king."

"Perhaps you are right," she answers, gently.

His enthusiasm appeals to her higher nature. It takes her for a moment beyond the trammels of caste and prejudice. Recalling her old ambition to be Lady Knollys of The Hall, and looking at it in this new light, it appears mean, narrow, pitiful, and she is ashamed.

Then, whilst the glamour is still upon her, they begin to talk upon other topics, gravely and earnestly still. They speak of poetry, of art, of religion, of pain, of sorrow, of some of those problems of existence which vex and puzzle so sorely any thinking man or woman who tries to fathom them. As May Pole-Gell has never opened her heart before she is led to open it to this stranger who boldly advances where she almost fears to tread, but who is ever so reverent as well as honest in his fearlessness.

Without, the fountain keeps babbling strangely and eloquently. Rex rises once or twice, yawns, stretches himself, and lies down again. The shadows begin to fall softly, softly, and the Rev. Pole-Gell does not come. Within, two minds are communing in grave and chosen words, and two hearts in rapturous speechlessness. With a start Colin awakes to the perception that it will soon be dark.

"I must not stay longer," he exclaims. "I little thought, at our first meeting, we should ever understand each other so well. Do you know, Miss Pole-Gell, I think our talk to-night has made me a better man?"

"It has done me good also," says the girl.

They stand clasping hands in the twilight; her soft fingers flutter a little, as though they would like to return his warm, strong pressure; her eyes shine upon him in the dimness like softly gleaming stars. Then he steps through the open window, and Rex, rising up, follows him like a noiseless black shadow until they melt away in the obscurity; and Miss Pole-Gell shivers, thinking that the night air has grown suddenly chill.

He has not gone far as yet. He has halted at the wicket-gate, he has turned his face and has stretched his hands with a passionate gesture to the path by which he came. Once his lips move in a whisper intense as the breathing of a prayer, and the words of the whisper are:

"My dear, dear love."

CHAPTER XII.

By his cloth of glossy black,
By his waistcoat and his breeches,
By the coat cut like a sack,
You may know a man who preaches.

Down that long sweep of easy gradient which leads to the village of Astonburne strides an individual who, if there be any veracity in costume, is a Church of England clergyman of the pronounced Ritualistic type.

His shovel hat, his long, straight coat, his silken vest (which appears to have adapted itself to his body by some mysterious process of evolution, there being no buttons visible) all proclaim as loudly as clothes can do the Anglican "priest." This being so it may strike one as a curious instance of ecclesiastical eccentricity that this clerical pilgrim, who shows like a black blot upon the white chalk of the road, carries in one hand a stiff shirt-collar, which he has removed to give his throat freer play, and in the other a bundle, the outer covering of which is a red cotton handkerchief, whilst between his teeth is stuck a short black pipe, and from his thin lips issues a dense cloud of tobacco smoke.

To complete the anomaly a curve in the road reveals at this instant the whole sweep of the valley below, and at sight of it the Ritualistic clergyman makes a dead halt, drops his bundle, removes the black pipe from his lips with a red, ungloved hand, and utters with astounded slowness the solemn ejaculation:

"I'll-be-danged!"

This is the sight which so surprises him. Almost every house in the village is making a grand display of bunting. Here and there, across the straggling street, triumphal arches have been erected. A flag is flying from the flag-staff at The Hall. In the centre of the park is an immense marquee, and about it the people of the country-side appear to have assembled in their thousands.

"There's summut up—summut wonderful," soliloquised the wayfarer, picking up his bundle and moving on. "Either another young barrow-knight is born or the old barrow-knight is dead, or—that's it, no doubt—the chap in the eye-glass and the lavender kids—he's come of age. 'Twould be about this time, I guess."

The reflection seems to last him until he has almost reached the village, then he speaks again.

"He weren't a bad sort, neither, in spite of his sneerin' ways—that young feller, her boy. Said as he were sure she'd be charged to renew the 'quaintance. As perlit as a French Mossao, he were—perlit as a rough cove in a canvas suit had any call to expect. I don't s'pose as I should ever have set foot in this here village again but for them words. Seemed to ring in my ears o' nights, they did. Lord! to think as I should clap eyes on her sweet face again, and she be glad to see me! It's worth a little discomfort in these durned go-to-meetin' togs, that it is."

With a glance of exceeding disfavour at his voluminous skirts the pedestrian quickens his pace, as though to expedite the meeting of which he speaks. There is not a soul in the straggling street, not one inquisitive nose flattened against a cottage window-pane, and when he reaches the Knollys Arms he finds nobody upon the premises save a superannuated hostler, who is keeping house with a stiff glass of brandy and water before him.

Finding it impossible to extract information from this worthy—whose replies are a remarkable tribute to the potency of the landlady's grog, and suggest that the hostler has put an enemy in his mouth which has effectually stolen away his brains—the clerical visitor coolly walks into the first bedroom he comes to and proceeds to make himself presentable.

His toilette is not elaborate, but it is lengthy, as though the cares of it were new and irksome. It takes him a long time to wash his face and hands and arrange his wisp of hair, longer to resume the stiff collar, longer still to induct his big red hands into a pair of black cotton gloves three sizes too large. But when the process is complete, and he contemplates himself in a pier-glass, he does not attempt to conceal his satisfaction.

"That's the ticket," he murmurs. "That's about the right trim, I guess, for ladies' society. Now I'll go up to The Hall and see what all the jollification's about. Nobody'll know me in this rig, of that I'm werry sure, and I can chuse my own time for the daynoement."

He sallies forth, looking in his glossy broad-cloth no unlikely representative, with his gaunt

figure and shaven face, of the Anglican priesthood. When he reaches the park small boys and jubilant rustics airing their best manners pull their forelocks respectfully, and the object of their salutations acknowledges them with a noiseless grin, which stretches his slit of a mouth from ear to ear and almost eclipses his merry, twinkling eyes.

But although he enjoys the joke hugely he is not quite at his ease, and as he approaches the marquee and recognises two members of a group near it, his gait aptly reflects the perturbation of his spirit.

"Chandos, who is the strange clergyman with the peculiar walk?" says Sir Marmaduke to his son.

The baronet is looking better than when we saw him last. On this grand occasion he has insisted upon being wheeled in his easy-chair to the centre of the festivities, and apparently the unwonted excitement has done him more good than harm.

"I will see," answers the young man, moving towards the stranger, and the next instant a hearty peal of irrepressible laughter announces that for once his sense of the ludicrous has triumphed over that foppish equanimity upon which he prides himself. The group around Sir Marmaduke's chair see the heir shaking hands in positive enthusiasm with the strange cleric.

"Will they do?" says the latter, with a glance which embraces vest, skirts, and nether limbs. "Respectable, ain't it? I shouldn't like your mother to be ashamed of an old 'quaintance, lad."

"Do! The get-up is superb!" cries Chandos, with another peal of laughter, which he vainly struggles to suppress. "What in the world put it into your head?"

"Saw a parson coming out of a swell tailor's, and concluded 'twould be exactly my cut, if ever I come to see your mother. Tailor objected, but a ten-pun note squared him—sharp. Durn the gloves and the collar though. I never felt so uncomfortable afore in all my born days."

"Come with me," cries Chandos, all his superciliousness laid aside for awhile, and his dark face working with mischievous delight. "Come with me; I am impatient to present you to Lady Knollys."

"Steady, lad, steady," murmurs Mr. Blunt, in a changed voice, which tells of sudden and deep emotion. "Do it quiet like, and not afore a crowd."

He has yielded to the pressure upon his arm; he has approached the group around the baronet's chair; his small, deep-set eyes have rested in turn, without recognition, upon the face of every lady present, including that of a slim, spare woman who is staring at him in haughty amazement with glass in eye.

"Ma mère," says Chandos, in a tone of suppressed merriment, "allow me to present to you a gentleman who claims to be an old acquaintance and friend."

"I—ah—really have not the pleasure," lips the lady with the eye-glass, looking icily at the soi-disant clergyman.

"Stow larks!" growls Mr. Blunt, uneasily. "I come here to speak to Lady Knollys, not to be made a fool of by a young idiot as ought to know better. Where's your mother, lad? I'll find her if you tell me which way to go."

"The man is either mad or intoxicated," murmurs my lady, with that disdainful trick of manner, the supercilious lifting of the eyebrows, which has descended to her son.

"This is Lady Knollys," explains May Pole-Gell, wonderingly, addressing the priest who has just used such very unclerical language.

"That?" shouts Mr. Blunt, with indignation. "That painted popinjay! Where's Master 'Duke?"

He wheels sharply round to the baronet's chair, and the eyes of the whole party follow his gaze. There, with his white face showing in livid and ghastly relief against the gay silken cushions, lies Sir Marmaduke—insensible.

Doctor Gywnne had prophesied that the excitement would prove too much for him before the day was out, and the prediction has come true. At the most inopportune moment, just

when everybody's attention was distracted by the extraordinary language and behaviour of this impostor in the garb of a clergyman, Sir Marmaduke has fainted.

(To be Continued.)

SCIENCE.

A NEW PRODUCT FROM BIRCH BARK.—A French inventor has patented a method of improving india-rubber and gutta-percha by the addition of a distillate of birch bark. By distilling the outer layers of the bark he obtains a dense black gummy matter which possesses the properties of ordinary gutta-percha with the additional quality of resisting both the action of the air and the strongest corrosive acids. He claims also that by adding a small proportion of the birch bark gum to gutta-percha or to india-rubber (one-twentieth part will suffice), the durability of the rubber or the gutta-percha will be greatly increased, the new mixture not being acted upon by the air or by acids.

GLOBULAR LIGHTNING.—A remarkable phenomenon of the nature of globular lightning was observed in August last by M. Trécul during a thunderstorm. A very bright, somewhat elongated, ball passed out of a dark cloud, and into it again at another place, but just before disappearing it gave off a little of its substance, which fell vertically, like a body having weight. The falling body, which left a luminous track, divided, and was extinguished a little above the tops of the houses. Another phenomenon, which M. Trécul has observed frequently, but which does not seem to have been before described, is that of a weakly luminous band or sheet, appearing momentarily in a street during a thunderstorm.

PHOTOGRAPHIC PHOTOMETRY.—A promising application of photography to precise measurement of phenomena of light has been recently tried by M. Janssen. The method is advantageous in that photography reveals the action of the extremely weak luminous and the ultra-violet rays; but the chief advantage lies in the permanence of the results as against the fugitive nature of ordinary photometric comparisons, which, too, requires the simultaneous presence of the two light sources. The various amounts of metallic deposit on the photographic plate cannot well be weighed, so M. Janssen measures by the degree of opacity produced. His photometer consists of a frame with sensitised plate, before which is passed at a known rate of uniform motion a shutter having a slit. If this slit were rectangular, a uniform shade would be produced on the plate; but by making it triangular he obtains a variation of shade, decreasing from the side corresponding to the base of the triangle to that corresponding to the apex. It is further proved that the photographic deposit does not increase as rapidly as the luminous intensity. Now, to compare the sensibility of two plates differently prepared they have merely to be exposed successively to the frame under like conditions, and the points where they show the same opacity being compared to the points of the triangular slit corresponding to them, the ratio of the apertures at those points expresses the ratio of sensibility. Thus the new gelatinobromide of silver plates are proved to be twenty times as sensitive as the collodion plates prepared by the wet process. Again, to compare two luminous sources, they are made to act successively on two similar plates in the photometer, and the points of equal shade in the plates indicate, as before, the relation sought. M. Janssen has compared the light of the sun and some stars on these principles, preparing from the former "solar scales" (with uniform degradation of shade), under exactly-determined conditions as to sensitive layer, time of solar action, height of the sun, &c. Circular images of stars are obtained by placing a photographic plate a little out of focus in the telescope, and a series of these, got with different times of exposure, are compared with the scales obtained from sunlight. M. Janssen will shortly make known some of his results.



[A STRANGE RELAPSE.]

A WINSOME WIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"From Her Own Lips," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MY WIFE.

Mine from the core of my heart, my beauty—
Mine, all mine, and for love, not duty.

TIME had slipped by since Leonard Warburton declared his love for the Lady Carita and won her shy consent to be his wife. She had written to and heard from her brother, and knew she had his best wishes, and that he was working his way towards civilisation and regular communication with home.

A date was already fixed for the marriage, but it was not as yet very near. There was a great deal to be done—an heiress cannot be married like any common person, and Mr. Warburton insisted on Lady Carita's interests being attended to in the fullest manner.

He was not quite the impecunious person he had appeared to the world when he proposed to Lord Toronto's daughter—a small fortune had come to him through the death of a relative and made him feel very much more independent.

The wedding was to be as simple as circumstances would permit, but as Lady Beckenham said very justly they owed something to society, and society decidedly expected a pretty ceremonial, even if Lady Carita persisted in being simply and unostentatiously dressed.

Besides, they hoped that Arthur would be at home for it. He had not absolutely promised, but he had written so heartily and seemed so glad of the way things had gone that it augured well for his presence. He was evidently coming to his senses. The disappearance of the tenants of the Nest, whether the young lady were really

dead or not, had been about the best thing that could have happened.

It wanted some six weeks of the time fixed for the wedding when Lady Carita received a letter from her brother definitely announcing his return. She was with Lady Beckenham when she read it, and her ladyship started to see that the colour left her face and the light died out of her eyes.

"What is it, dear?" she asked. "Is there anything wrong? Is Arthur ill?"

"No."

"What is it then?"

For answer Lady Carita put the letter in her hand and bade her read it.

"It can't be true," she said; "there must be some horrible blunder; I don't think I understand it quite."

"I do," Lady Beckenham said; and indeed there was not much left to the imagination in the epistle; Lord Toronto was explicit enough.

"Ottawa, June 7, 18—

"MY DARLING LITTLE SISTER,—I have your last beseeching letter before me, and in answer to it, my dear, I have but one word to say—I WILL come home and put your hand into that of the best man that ever drew breath. I am thankful to think that your heart will be in it, and that you have forgotten the other little love fever—it was only a little one—a mistake, child, nothing more. You would not have been as happy in that match, even supposing that the course of your love had run smooth as yours will be with Warburton. The man is dead now; of course you know all about that miserable affair."

"Of course we do," Lady Beckenham said, looking up from the letter. "But what does he know about it more than he has heard from us? He writes as though the subject were quite familiar."

"Oh, it is, it is," Lady Carita said, in a pained tone. "Go on, auntie, you will soon know where he has got his knowledge from."

"I know from many things," the letter went

on, "that he was not a man calculated to make a woman happy, but I cannot trust myself to speak of him, for his death has made me the happiest of men. You do not know, little sister, why I went away from you all, and why my life has been so aimless ever since our father's death. Auntie and my good friend Leonard both know, and now I'm going to tell you. It was because I loved a woman and had lost her—"

"Yes, the viper, I do know," Lady Beckenham said, with much unction, "but, thank Heaven, that danger is over. It was a beggar woman, Carita, a low street singer; and how she came to catch Mr. Treherne, for she was his wife, I can't think. However, she's dead now, and there's an end of that."

"Dead, oh, no! He has found her. You will see if you read on. It is horrible! He must be bewitched."

"I was led to believe the woman I loved was dead. She was a wife when I met her again and as sacred for me as a sister would have been, and then I heard of her death, and the light of my life went out all at once. I am writing nonsense I am afraid and not making things very clear to you, who know nothing of my former madness, but it is all in very joy, for it was a fraud, my dear, a scheme to get her out of the way. She is alive and by my side as I write. My wife—my golden-haired darling! Yes, Carita, I am married, and to the most beautiful wife that ever graced a drawing-room. She is poor, but not quite the nameless nobody that you may imagine. She is of good descent, and will be no disgrace to the Petronel lineage. I cannot tell you in the limits of a letter how she came to find me out, it was almost entirely an accident. She had been working for her living, poor dear, after her husband's death, taking pupils and what not, and had come to America with some people as a sort of companion. I fancy they must have used her very badly and left her alone and unprotected. But she will not say a word against them. She heard of me in the far west where she herself was, and resolved to come to me and

ask me to help her back to England. She little thought how I should welcome her. I found proper companions and attendants for her, and we were married here two days ago. I have done with the wild life of the rocks and hills, and I am Lord Toronto once more clothed and in my right mind. I shall bring you a sweet, loving sister, little woman, and I hope you will try and receive her as such for my sake as well as for her own. If you could hear how she speaks of you and auntie as having been so kind to her in the old time at the Nest you would welcome her with open arms."

"Should we?" said Lady Beckenham, grimly, while Lady Carita bent her head upon her hands and cried as if her heart would break. She was shocked and disappointed. She loved her brother very dearly, and somehow, though she did not know quite all the circumstances, she felt that this match of infatuation, for it was nothing else, could not end happily for him.

"To think of his marrying a widow too!" Lady Beckenham said, when she had exhausted all other reasons for annoyance at the sudden news. "And it was done in some shameful way, I suppose—scrambled through in some register office, and no one will ever know whether they are man and wife or not."

She was mistaken there. By the next post there came a paper, delayed somehow in transmission, setting forth that Lord Toronto and Stella Treherne were married in Ottawa, and giving an account of the ceremony and who were present. The world must have turned upside down, the two ladies thought, and wondered what more of surprise fortune could have in store for them after this.

It was not a pleasant interval, the waiting for the home-coming of the earl and his bride, but they wisely agreed to make the best of things and receive the new mistress of Petronel as cordially as they could.

Leonard Warburton did not believe one word of the story about the new countess having met her lord by accident. He knew her scheming nature, and he felt sure that she had compassed the meeting in some fashion best known to herself.

"Heaven help him," was his comment on the letter, "for man cannot. I only hope he may not be as wretched as I fear he will, poor fellow. Poor Arthur. His bliss with that woman will soon come to an end."

The news cast quite a gloom over the wedding preparations, and Lady Carita felt that Petronel would never be quite the same to her again. She feared the golden-haired syren who had captivated her brother, and wished she could be married away before she came to rule in the home that had been so dear to her till now. She struggled with all her might against the feeling, telling herself she was very wicked to feel so about a woman of whom she knew nothing, but the sentiment was there and would not be put down. There was nothing for it but to wait till the earl came home with his bride, which he did about a fortnight before the day fixed for her own wedding.

It was painful for both the ladies to stand at the great door waiting to welcome they scarcely knew whom, but they did it bravely, and there was no trace of scorn or dislike when Arthur Petronel stepped from the carriage and handed his wife out. Surely the loveliest mistress that the old place had ever known. Not Ada Durand, with the brown hair who had lodged in Amanda Villas, and been frightened away from there by a nameless vagrant, nor the quiet young person who knew her place so well in Sir Ephraim Thistlethwaite's household, nor the wan, despairing singer of the streets, but a radiant creature whose hair looked as if it were made of sunbeams, and who was full of pretty confusion and embarrassment at coming to her new home.

"Carita, this is your sister," was the earl's introduction, and Lady Carita kissed the quivering rosy lips, unable to say a word of welcome to her new relation.

"We welcome you to Petronel, Lady Toronto," was Lady Beckenham's greeting, as she shook

hands with the new comer, and the wicked heart under the lace mantle that shrouded the young countess beat high with agitation and triumph.

It was her first recognition except from her husband, and she began to feel that she had indeed won all she had schemed for.

The servants one and all took to their new lady. She had the gift of winning when she chose to exercise it, and she did choose now. None of the earl's dependents knew who their new lady had been. They surmised from many things that she was not exactly of the upper ten, but they had always seen her ladylike and quiet as Mrs. Stapleton, and thought what they chose about her former life.

No explanation was ever vouchsafed of her reappearance in the land of the living when she had been thought dead. It was a mistake. That was all they were told, and they were left to imagine what they liked. The facts that Noel Treherne had been a married man, and that the Earl of Toronto had married his widow, were made patent to the world at one and the same time, and gave the gossips plenty to talk about.

Here also no explanation was given. Society might take up the young countess or let her alone. It did not matter much. She was Countess of Toronto, and all the cold shoulders in the world could not alter that fact. It was understood—by whom put about no one seemed quite to know—that her marriage with Mr. Treherne had been unhappy as well as secret.

People talked about her as people will, but words are but sound and do no harm, and she only tossed her golden head and declared herself too happy for anything to do her any mischief.

Mr. Treherne read the announcement of the earl's marriage with a stunned, bewildered feeling as of a man in a dream. He was away from London at the time quietly enjoying the sea, and seemed to gain strength and health as the days went on. He was one of those hypochondriacal invalids to whom excitement, no matter of what sort, is new life, and though he mourned for his nephew as he would have grieved for a son, the necessity for him to attend to his own affairs had done him a world of good.

"Norton," he gasped, staring blankly at the paper, "look here."

"Yes, sir," the valet replied. "I heard of it yesterday."

"But it is not true! It is a lie!"

"I don't fancy it is, sir. I thought there was something of that sort before Mr. Noel died. They would hardly publish such a thing if it were not true."

"No, I suppose not. But who is she?"

"She is the loveliest creature that was ever seen," Norton replied. "I saw her yesterday when I was in town. She was pointed out to me in Piccadilly."

"Is it the woman who wept and moaned over the grave at St. Amalie, do you think?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"Nor that pert minx that came here with her ladyship that morning?"

"No, sir. The new Countess of Toronto isn't in the least like either," was Norton's very puzzling and misleading reply, and he firmly believed he was speaking the truth.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MR. TREVETHICK'S LODGER.

An aged man
With palsied limbs and features wan.

PEOPLE wondered how Joe Trevethick came to take a lodger, or to allow his wife to undertake the charge of one who was, as they declared, only like another child to manage and attend to, for the lodger was a poor, crippled invalid who had not the proper use of his limbs, to say nothing of his faculties, which appeared to be something wanting.

Joe lived at Looe, a queer, quaint little place not many miles from Liskeard, and some sixteen or so from where Doctor Brandspeth resided. Doctor Brandspeth was very well known in Looe—indeed it would have been difficult to tell

where in Cornwall the doctor was not known—and he had had something to do with the placing of the person about whom the town was so much exercised in his present quarters.

Zephaniah Puddlewick had been mixed up in it somehow too, and Zeph was by no means unknown in Looe, whither he sometimes went on errands for the doctor, who always knew that he could trust Zeph to the uttermost.

Looe thinks a good deal of itself on the whole, and holds up its insignificant head with the most ancient towns in England. It is no new place. It was a thriving town, notorious for its smuggling proclivities, when the Stuarts were fighting for their rights, and leading a scrambling sort of existence strangely at variance with royal dignity, and had been a noticeable harbour in the days when Cornwall helped to furnish forth ships for the defeat of the wonderful Armada, which was to do so much and accomplished so little.

Joe Trevethick's wife was a Liskeard woman, and had been a sort of occasional help in the household of the good doctor, who had taken an interest in her ever since, and perhaps that was the reason of his offering her the lodger whom he was able to recommend. He drove over one day and surprised her at her various jobs of making and mending. Never a man in Looe turned out neater when his day's work was done than Joe. She kept him in knitted frocks and well-shaped worsted hose, and made and mended for him till he was the envy of men with slatternly wives and untidy households, and the admiration of all the women in the place.

There said it was pride and uppishness to turn out nice and always have a clean hearth when their husbands came home from the fishing, but they would have given a great deal, many of them, to have had the knack which brought it all about and the pleasant looks and words with which the satisfied Joe greeted his better half when he came in. He never knocked her down, or upset her pot of washing into the fire, and then went off to the public-house never to stir till he was dragged through the streets more like a dead dog than a rational man. But then there was never anything to provoke him to such a course.

His Jenny was always clean, and if the food was sometimes of the plainest when the fishing was slack there was the double seasoning of good temper and good appetite to eat it with.

"Did you please to want Joe, sir?" Jenny asked, as the doctor came in with kindly greeting, "because he's away to Polperro, and I don't know when he'll be home. He's giving Mark Penruddock a hand with his load of coals."

"I think I want to see you more than Joe," Doctor Brandspeth replied. "You must ask him, of course, but you will have more to do with the business I have come about than he will."

Mrs. Trevethick looked rather troubled. She was so accustomed to turn to Joe in everything that the notion of business which might pertain to her more than to her husband was somewhat alarming.

"I'm a poor thing without Joe, sir," she said, simply, proud of her trust in and reliance on her big, awkward husband, "and if it's business—"

"Well, yes, it is business, but as I say it is more yours than his. Would you like to earn a little money?"

"Ay, that I should, sir. Joe needn't work so hard then, may be, poor fellow."

Oh, the love of these hard-working wives, always the "Joe" of the household before themselves. Mrs. Trevethick had no thought of herself in the business—the work would fall on her and the responsibility—she would have to plan and contrive and do half as much again in her little household. Yet her only thought was that Joe would not "have to work so hard may be."

It was a good thing that Joe was worthy of her love and care. All husbands are not, and take the service that is given in love as so much duty and their right.

"Do you think you could do with a lodger, Jenny?"

"I don't know, but I might, sir," Mrs. Trevethick said, with pleasant interest, "if so be it was a tidy person who wouldn't give trouble where there was no need, and didn't get drunk."

"You need have no fear of the last," Dr. Brandspeth said. "As to the trouble, I am afraid you must make up your mind to a great deal, but you will be well paid. The gentleman—"

"Oh, sir, I couldn't take a gentleman," Jenny said, in a tone of consternation.

Her head had been running on some fisher lad perhaps, or someone from a country farm who wanted a breath of sea air at a cheap rate. A gentleman sounded something tremendous and quite out of her line.

"Oh, you needn't be frightened," the doctor said, pleasantly. "You will get on with Mr. Talbot very well."

"Is that his name, sir?"

"Yes, and he is a great invalid, or rather I should say he has been. He wants nothing now but air and rest and the attendance of just such a sonsy clean woman as you, and your husband to row him out now and then, and he will do very well. If you can make up your mind to take him you will earn money enough to help you through the winter when it comes again nicely."

"My room is but a poor place, sir," Mrs. Trevethick said, looking as if she liked the prospect nevertheless. "I am afraid it will not be good enough for him."

"It is enough to cure an invalid to sleep in it for a month, Jenny, and you have a view from that top window of yours that the Queen might envy. Make up your mind, there's a good woman. I think I can answer for Joe."

He might with safety, for Joe always saw exactly as his "old woman" did, and he had not overrated the pleasantness and quietude of the little chamber that Jenny let when she could find anyone to her mind to occupy it.

It was somewhat quaint and primitive in its arrangements, but Dr. Brandspeth took mental note of its capabilities and said he would send in anything that might be wanted that would increase its comfort.

The gentleman was extremely feeble, he said, but in no sort of danger now. All he wanted was good attendance and nicely cooked food, and at cooking Jenny was an adept. She was half frightened when the bargain was completed and the doctor put some money into her hand.

"It's too much, sir," she gasped. "It's twice as much as I—"

"Of course, and Mr. Talbot will require twice as much attendance as a man in full health. Take it, Jenny; it isn't rent, it is only what the Scotch call a hanel, that is a deposit, you know. I shall drive over with the gentleman to-morrow, and some of the things that I think he will want will be here to-night."

There was a terrible amount of gossip over a barrow load of articles that presently arrived at Joe Trevethick's door from the one place in the little town where anything like furniture could be procured, and Joe himself arriving in the midst of the gossip and the delivery of the goods wondered whether Jenny had gone suddenly mad and her mania found vent in furniture buying.

"There's no call to be afraid that I can see," he said, when the goods were housed and his wife had told him all about it. "If the doctor says it's all right depend upon it it is, and a good thing for us, old woman."

"But what shall we do with him, Joe? A gentleman, and him so ill. He'll want—"

"Never mind what he wants. We can get it for him I suppose, unless it's a bit of the moon, or mermaid's back hair, or something of that sort. Come, old girl, I'll back you for nursing and cooking against any woman in Looe. Things'll all shake down in a day or two. What's the man's name?"

"Mr. Talbot."

"That doesn't sound like a name hereabouts. I daresay he's one of the doctor's patients from another country."

A good way off was what Joe meant, but that

was his way of putting it. Outsiders are very much the same as foreigners to the dwellers of the south-western corner of our island.

Mrs. Trevethick could hardly sleep all that night, so exercised was she in her mind about the coming lodger, and she was all of a tremble when the doctor drove up, not in his trap, but in the close fly from the principal hotel at Liskeard.

She almost screamed when he and the driver between them lifted out a pale scarecrow of a creature with a bandaged head and wild, staring eyes that looked as if nothing but a miracle could ever restore it to health and strength again.

She made way for them to pass into her neat kitchen and then shut out the little posse of eager eyes and ears that would fain have assisted at the interview.

"That's right," the doctor said, as his charge was deposited gasping in a chair. "He's a little jolted and tired now, but he'll soon be all right."

"He looks as if he was dying, sir," Jenny said, in consternation.

"Not he. If you'd seen him a short time ago you would think him well now. I would not have quartered him on you if I did not know that he would be soon well."

"But you didn't say he was 'mazed' sir," Jenny said, in alarm. "I shall never know what to do with him."

"Oh, yes, you will," Dr. Brandspeth replied, cheerily. "He isn't 'mazed' in the way you mean it." Jenny had used the very expressive word of her part of the country to express insanity. "He is quite harmless and getting better every day. I did not tell you, because I knew you would take fright, and I wanted you to have him. I would not trust to everybody as I shall to you."

"You are very good, sir," Mrs. Trevethick said, her pride flattered by the confidence, which was not misplaced. "I'll do my best, that I will. Has he no friends, poor gentleman?"

"Not one, Jenny, but you and me, but he has plenty of money to pay for the care he wants. You need deny him nothing."

"That I won't, sir."

She looked at her new inmate as she spoke, with something less of dismay than at first. The face was settling down into something more like repose, and was not quite so vacant. He was a very old gentleman it seemed, for his hair was white and very thin, though there was not much of it to be seen under the skull-cap that he wore.

He muttered something about being thirsty, and Jenny put some tea to his lips. There was something evidently magnetic in her touch, something skilful in the way she steadied his head while he drank, and the invalid recognised it immediately.

"I will stay with you," he said. "Take care of me."

There was something so helpless in his voice and manner that Jenny took to him directly, and began attending to his comforts as if she had known him all her life, and Doctor Brandspeth looked on with a pleasant smile.

"I knew I had chosen well," he said. "You will not mind the charge, Jenny?"

"No, sir, I'll do my best."

"It will be a real Christian work," he said. "He has been mercifully preserved from a dreadful death. But I look at him and think sometimes it would have been better if he had died. I am terribly afraid his waking will only be for unhappiness, but we will do our best."

"Is he a friend of yours, sir?"

"No, only a patient, but I am proud of him so far. Ay, you may look at him. He seems a terrible wreck to you—to me he is a miracle of what Providence and doctoring can do. I have learned a good deal of his history in his delirium. If he should ramble in his talk while he is with you, you will keep his nonsense to yourself, will you not?"

"I will, sir. But you will come and see him?"

"About twice a week; I cannot promise more."

But if any change takes place in his condition you will send for me at once."

Jenny promised, and after a few directions Doctor Brandspeth drove away well pleased with the arrangements he had made for his friendless patient.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MR. TALBOT.

Oh, fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long—
Know how sublime a thing it is
To suffer and be strong.

DR. BRANDSPETH doubtless knew well what he was about when he placed his helpless patient under the care of Joe Trevethick and his clean and careful wife. It seemed to a casual observer as if the poor gentleman could never be anything more than what he appeared now—a hopeless idiot, and gossip ran high in the little town about him.

All sorts of stories were set about concerning him and Dr. Brandspeth's connection with him, and Jenny was questioned on all sides without much result, for she had the gift of holding her tongue, and whatever she might have guessed about her charge she made no one else the wiser. Looe in general came to the conclusion somehow that "Zeph knew all about it."

Zeph was very well known in the town. He came there frequently, indeed he wandered hither and thither all over East Cornwall, and would have been sorely missed if anything had happened to him.

Zeph presented himself at Joe Trevethick's door two or three days after Mr. Talbot had been placed there, and announced that he had come to see the gentleman.

"Why, what do you know about him, Zeph?" Jenny asked, motioning the man to sit down, for he looked dusty and tired.

"Oh, I know—me and the doctor," was Zeph's enigmatical reply. "I found him, I did."

"You found him, Zeph? Where?"

"Where he hurted himself," Zeph responded, and nothing more was to be got out of him.

He had his own reasons for secrecy, and held his tongue.

"The gentleman won't know you, Zeph. He doesn't know anyone, poor thing."

"He'll know me. You let me see him."

And it appeared he did, for he recognised the misshapen Zeph with a child-like pleasure, and seemed pleased to have him near him.

"You should stay in Looe, Zeph, and help to take him about. He'd be the better maybe for someone he knows about him," Jenny said, wondering at the strange tenderness that the uncouth fellow displayed in speaking to her lodger.

"Can't," was Zeph's reply.

"Why not?"

"I am going away."

"Going away? Where to?"

"To London—I know—Zeph knows. I'm going to make my fortune, I am."

The idea of Zeph's making his fortune, and venturing anywhere out of the part of the world where he was born was so amazing to Jenny that she had nothing to say in reply, and sat down in a chair and stared at him. She did not believe him, and it was only when she heard from Dr. Brandspeth that he had really gone that she understood he was actually in earnest.

"I only hope he will come back safe," the doctor said. "He seems to know what he is going about and where."

"Then you do know, sir?"

"I know something, and I guess more. Zeph has gone to find a person he declares he has seen in our neighbourhood. I must confess I have my doubts whether it is not all a delusion. I cannot hear that there was any such person seen at the time he names. When that poor fellow comes to himself we shall know more about it perhaps."

"They say he never will, sir," Jenny said, hesitatingly.

"Who say?"

"The people, sir."

"You may tell the people that they know nothing about it; I say he will. It may be a long time, but it will come if you abide by my directions and take care of him, as I know you do."

"I couldn't help it, sir, he's helpless," was Jenny's reply.

She was of the order of women who take to helpless things as naturally as mothers take to their children, and this lonely man had found his way, imbecile though he was, into her warm heart.

There seemed no great change in him at first, but in a few days they began to fancy that he was the better for the sea air and the salt water bathing, which Joe and a colleague of his treated him to every morning. His mind seemed much in the same state till one morning it appeared to them all as if there had come a glimpse of reason.

It was wild and wet, weather that kept even Joe at home, and he borrowed a newspaper for the delectation of himself and his wife, who was busy with many bits of sewing and housework. The lodger was with them in the room; he might not be left alone, and he always seemed better when he was dressed and set down in Jenny's comfortable kitchen where he could hear and see what was going on.

"Eh, but that's awful!" Mrs. Trevethick said, as her lord read aloud an account of a railway accident, where there had been more than the average of deaths and terrible wounds.

It was not in England, but the details were sufficiently horrible to interest English newspaper readers, and there were two or three English people among the maimed and killed.

Only one of the latter, Mr. Noel Treherne; and a curious change came over the face of the helpless man in Jenny's armchair as the name was mentioned.

"Noel Treherne," he muttered. "I know—I know!"

He laughed feebly as he spoke, as if he were proud of the knowledge that was coming back to him.

"Did you know the poor gentleman?" Joe Trevethick asked.

"Yes—Noel Treherne. He is not dead?"

"Yes, he is, as dead as Pharoah and all his host, I should say. Anyway he's buried."

"Dead and buried—Noel Treherne—no, no—I know—I do—he is—"

He stopped as if vainly trying to recollect something, and then the passing glimpse of reason seemed to disappear as quickly as it had brightened.

"Don't say anything to him," Joe said to his wife, who was rather inclined to question him again. "Let him be. If he really did understand it will come back again. Let him rest a bit, perhaps he'll remember a bit more presently."

Joe was wise. If they had tried to fan the flickering light that had shown itself for a moment they might have put it out altogether, and it showed itself again in a very little while. Only two days afterwards Joe, being out with Mr. Talbot on the beach, heard him repeat the name to himself, "Noel Treherne."

He had forgotten it, and after a while he turned to Joe and asked him in a more rational voice than he had ever heard him use whether he had not heard him use the name somewhere.

"Yes," Joe said, gently. "I read it out of a newspaper."

"Killed? Dead?"

"Yes."

"I remember."

He was silent for some time, and then asked if he had been ill, and Joe told him how long he had been at Looe and who brought him, to all of which he listened attentively, but almost as it seemed without understanding. That he did understand was presently evident from his asking for Dr. Brandspeth, and seeming terribly disappointed that it was too late in the day to think of fetching him. A trap should be sent the very first thing in the morning, he was told, and he seemed tolerably satisfied. He slept

badly, and was not nearly so well in health the next morning, but wonderfully clearer in his mind.

"I understand things a little now," Joe heard him mutter. "I remember the storm and falling—falling, and then utter darkness; and Noel Treherne is dead, and I am here in a fisherman's hut, with a woman who treats me as a mother might treat a dearly loved son. She shall be repaid tenfold if I am spared."

Dr. Brandspeth at once responded to Joe's message and came over to Looe. He evidently thought a great deal of this patient, whom no one knew, and was anxious to have him get well again as soon as possible. He was closeted with him a long time, and ascertained thoroughly how far the improvement had progressed.

"I was sure of it," he said to himself, as he left the house. "I knew some mental shock was necessary to rouse him from his lethargy, and the news of Noel Treherne's death has done it—it is a tangled web, but I think I have the end of the clue. There will be a bitter retribution for somebody before it is all done with, I am afraid."

The improvement was so marked that it was patent to everyone that Mr. Talbot was no longer "mazed." He was rather peculiar, and had the air of a man who was always waiting for something, and given to talk to himself and dream away the hours in reverie, which it was too evident was painful. But he answered sensibly when spoken to, and seemed to gain strength with every passing day.

"It's wicked to be sorry you are getting well," Jenny said to him one day, when he had been out on the water and come back, as she said, with quite a colour and an appetite. "But I do feel sorry, for we shall lose you. I don't mean for the money," she added, hastily, feeling that she might be misconstrued, "but because we like you so."

"I believe you," he said, and took her hard hand in his own; "and I am quite sure it is not for the money. I shall be just sorry to go, but I don't mean to go yet, Jenny."

"I'm thankful to hear it, sir."

"No, I like your little house and your company, and I want to stay somewhere where I shall not be seen or known till—I am quite well," he added, hastily, as if he had intended to finish his sentence in another way. "I am a lonely man and have no friends to regret my absence, and Looe is a pretty place. I hope we shall not part yet."

He seemed to have some plan in his head for the future that he did not tell her of, but, as she said, it was no business of hers, and she was only too glad to keep him in any way. He consulted with Dr. Brandspeth about his affairs. She could hear them talking earnestly whenever the doctor came to see him, and she understood that Dr. Brandspeth wanted her lodger to go and stay with him for a time, but Mr. Talbot refused.

"This is quieter and safer," she heard him say. "Inquiries might be made at your place. The people you know of might perhaps have been traced as far as that, and I want to be quiet and unknown until I can have revenge full and certain."

Mrs. Trevethick was certain she heard him say "revenge," and in a bitter tone of voice too. But then he wasn't quite himself yet, poor gentleman, and might be talking wildly. One thing she wondered a little at—as soon as Mr. Talbot grew well enough to read the newspapers for himself he had all the most expensive and fashionable of the London society papers sent to him at Looe, and seemed to pore over them as if he expected to find some piece of intelligence of importance to him.

It came at last. She was startled one morning by finding him in a fit, as she thought, on the floor of his bedroom, with papers of all sorts scattered on and around him. She could find nothing which she could fix upon as the cause of his illness. She did what she could and sent for Dr. Brandspeth, but by the time he came Mr. Talbot was much better and able to sit up and talk to him.

"It was only the shock," the invalid said.

"It has come, as I told you it would. You did not believe there could be such wickedness in the world. Here is the record of it."

"And what shall you do?"

"Go to town, and—"

"Not yet, you will kill yourself. Wait till you have a little strength for the journey. You will gain nothing by hurry, and what is done is done; you cannot undo it any the quicker by doing yourself a mischief."

"True—I will wait. I should not like to break down in the moment of what I have been longing for. I will do your bidding, doctor. Cure me, and then I will go."

It would be some time before he would be able to go anywhere. Whatever had happened to excite him had prostrated him bodily as much as it had advanced and stirred him up mentally, and for some weeks after the fainting fit he was very ill. All the worse that he was fevered with a fierce anxiety to get well, that in itself was enough to retard his recovery; and in the meantime Zeph came back to the Cheesewring and announced to all whom it might concern that he had made his fortune and was going to America.

(To be Continued.)

OUR COLUMNS FOR THE CURIOUS.

CHEVALIER BAYARD.—April 30, 1524. The Chevalier Bayard was buried near Grenoble. He was a distinguished French warrior, and Francis the First chose to be knighted by his sword. Bayard was mortally wounded in the retreat from Rebec. (See Life of Charles V. by Dr. Robertson.) Ordering his squire to place him against a tree with his face to the enemy, on the Constable of Bourbon, then fighting against his country, coming up and expressing his regret at seeing him in this situation, the dying Chevalier exclaimed: "It is not I who am to be pitied, but you, who are bearing arms against your king, your country, and your oath." Bayard was in his fiftieth year. His name has become a synonym for all that is noble and chivalrous—the knight "sans peur et sans reproche," without fear and without reproach.

ABBOTSFORD.—We learn that a certain German speculator, naturalised in England, has lately completed the purchase of the classic ground of Abbotsford, near Melrose, where Sir Walter Scott breathed his last. It is sad to contemplate such changes. Sir Walter's eldest son, Lieutenant Scott, died at sea, on his return passage from Africa. At Abbotsford, too, in the year 1854 died the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, John Gibson Lockhart, the editor of the Quarterly Review, author of Valerius, and many essays and novels, besides his imperishable biography of Sir Walter, a work which will last with the language. In recent years, we believe, Abbotsford has been in the possession of Mr. Hope Scott, a cadet of the family of the Earl of Hope-town. It is not very pleasant to think of the home reared and founded by "the Ariosto of the North" (as Lord Byron describes him) going under the hammer. But such is fate, and such sometimes the spirit of our age. Canaris, the Greek admiral, when he burnt the Turkish fleet in the harbour of Scio, encouraged his men by translating to them two lines from "Marmion":

"Each stepping where his comrade stood
The instant that he fell."

THAT FAT MAN OF SPARTA.—The Spartans of old showed no mercy to fat humanity. They paid much attention to the rearing of men. They took charge of the firmness and looseness of men's flesh, and regulated the degree of fatness to which it was lawful in a free state to any citizen to extend his body. Those who dared to grow too soft or fat for military exercise and the service of Sparta were soundly whipped. In one particular instance, that of Nauchis, the son of

Polybius, the offender was brought before the "Ephoroi" (the name given to the Spartan senators) and a meeting of the whole of the people of Sparta, at which his unlawful fatness was exposed, and he was threatened with perpetual banishment if he did not bring his body within the regular Spartan compass, and give up his culpable mode of living, which was declared unworthy of a Spartan.

A LADY AND KINDNESS TO ANIMALS.—Mrs. Isabella Burton, so well known as the wife of the great traveller Captain Richard Burton, and as herself a traveller and author of considerable repute, has been employing her time at Trieste, where her husband is English Consul, in a work of nobility and mercy by no means to be slighted because its mission is to brutes. This gentle and energetic lady at first addressed herself more especially to labours of human charity, but the Austrian Adriatic seaport seems to be blessed in this respect; she was somewhat scornfully asked whether she supposed that the people of Trieste knew nothing of charity before she came to teach them. And in effect she found forty-eight benevolent institutions in full activity among the poor and sick. It was far otherwise with the poor animals, overworked, underfed, beaten, and slaughtered without the check of legislation. Mrs. Burton's efforts have been eminently successful, and the more so, no doubt, from the fact that they were directed less to the chastisement of cruelty than to the reward and encouragement of kindness. A ruffianly donkey driver who had long eluded her watchfulness, by covering up the wounds of his poor little beast as he passed along the streets, was at last detected, through her stratagem in sleeping for a night at a roadside inn which the man was wont to pass. She heard the sound of the stick in the early morning, sprang from her bed, flew out in a dressing gown, and bought the donkey, without making any effort to punish its wretched owner. Nevertheless, it is with some satisfaction that she records that the man's wife herself administered the fellow a beating for returning donkeyless. The tramways, markets, and roads of busy Trieste are now full of evidences of the good accomplished by Mrs. Burton and the society she presides over.

ERSKINE'S WIT.—Lord Erskine was a wit, and the most eloquent advocate of his day. His wit, however, was never venomous, but uttered with such good-natured and high-bred courtesy as to disarm those it pierced. An old lawyer by the name of Lamb was constitutionally timid, and on one occasion remarked that he felt himself growing more and more timid as he grew older. "No wonder," replied Erskine, good-naturedly; "everyone knows that the older a lamb grows the more sheepish he becomes." The Duke of Queensberry laid before Erskine a case as to whether he, the duke, could sue a tradesman for breach of contract about the painting of his house. As the evidence was insufficient to support the case, Erskine replied as follows "I am of opinion that this action will not lie, unless the witnesses do."

EFFECT OF SMOKING ON BOYS.—One of the medical journals records the observations of a physician, who has been investigating with great minuteness and accuracy the effects of tobacco smoking on boys. He took for this purpose thirty-eight boys from nine to fifteen years, and carefully examined them. In twenty-seven of the number he discovered injurious traces of the habit. In twenty-two there were various disorders of the circulation and digestion, palpitation of the heart, and a more or less taste for strong drink. In twelve of the cases there occurred frequent bleeding of the nose, ten had disturbed sleep, and twelve had slight ulceration of the mucous membrane of the mouth, which disappeared on ceasing the use of tobacco for some days. The doctor treated them all for weakness, but with little effect, until the smoking was discontinued, when health and strength were soon restored.

ALLIGATORS' NESTS.—These nests resemble hay cocks. They are four feet high and five in diameter at their bases, being constructed with grass and herbage. First they deposit one layer of eggs on a floor of mortar, and having

covered this with a stratum of mud herbage eight inches thick, lay another set of eggs upon that, and so on to the top, there being commonly from one to two hundred eggs in a nest. With their tails they then beat down round the nest the dense grass and reeds, five feet high, to prevent the approach of their unseen enemies. The female watches her eggs until they are hatched by the sun, and then takes the brood under her care, defending them and providing for their subsistence. Dr. Luckenburg, of New Orleans, remarked that he once packed up one of their nests, together with the eggs, in a box for the Museum of St Petersburg, but was recommended, before he closed it, to see that there was no danger of the eggs being hatched during the voyage. On opening one a young alligator walked out, and was soon followed by the rest—about a hundred—which were fed in the doctor's house, where they went up and down stairs, barking and whining like young puppies.

THE BOERS.—A Dutchman and an Englishman in South Africa are two very different people. The Boer will live, even after he is comparatively rich, in a house of which the floor is the hard trodden earth, and surrounded with scarcely any of the comforts which the most remote English settler would consider essential to his existence. Yet the Dutchman is perfectly content, while the Englishman is full of complaints of the country, the government, his neighbours, the climate, the soil, and indeed of everything and everybody save his own disposition and himself. The Englishman is a social personage; he likes society and the gossip of his own race. The Boer cares for no one's smoke in sight of his chimney, and like the Western American settler who moved when a second stranger had been seen near his cabin, "that full" would almost resent anyone taking up a farm in his close vicinity. His pastoral tastes require much land for their development, and nothing troubles him so much as the fear that in time he may find his cattle and sheep too many for the grass which he has to offer them. Hence a Dutchman sees little forbidding in the country north of the Orange River, though to a stranger, even to the least alluring portion of the Cape, the Orange River and Transvaal are extremely depressing.—(From "The Countries of the World," by Dr. Robert Brown.)

THE TOWERS OF SILENCE.—These towers, which are built on the top of Malabar Hills, in the island adjacent to Bombay, are six in number, and overlook the sea; the oldest one being three hundred years old. The internal arrangements of the towers are as follows: The bodies are placed in three separate circles—the outer and larger one for men, the middle one for women, and the smallest for children. There is a pit in the centre, into which the bones are thrown after the flesh is stripped off, and there are pits to allow the priest to move about. The flooring gradually sinks to the centre to let the rain into the pits, from which it percolates through filters into the earth. The towers vary in size from about thirty to fifty feet in diameter, and eight to fourteen in height. This Parsee mode of disposing of the dead seems to European minds very revolting. The body, after the religious ceremony is performed in the temple where the friends are assembled, is carried out and placed in one of the towers, where it remains exposed to the elements until the flesh is entirely eaten off by the crowds of vultures which frequent the place in about an hour. When the skeleton becomes dry it is thrown into the pit in the centre; thus the rich and poor meet together on one level of equality after death. When the pit becomes full of bones they are taken out and thrown into the sea, thus fulfilling one of the principal tenets of the Zoroastrian religion—"That the mother Earth shall not be defiled."

A HYENA HUNT.—The "Bombay Gazette" in describing a run with the Bombay hounds, in which a hyena broke away after the preliminary capture of a legitimate jackal, says: "A find was made immediately after the throw-off, and splendid music re-echoed among the trees before the field had quite time to get properly settled down to the morning's work. Master jackal, how-

ever, kept to covert as long as he could, affording opportunity for collection of the riders' wits, and when he at last broke away he was followed by the entire field. The lines at first lay through some gardens, and the ground was rather soft, but it soon after crossed the open paddy land beyond, and jack was then viewed making straight for the hills which border the western side of the upper harbour. He ran well and hard, but the hounds were swifter, and they got him before he had gone a mile. The master then led round the hill on the right, and bore away towards Sion, drawing such covert as was passed, but without success. The hounds were then thrown on to the small steep and rocky hill near Sion, on the eastern side of which is the magazine. The master climbed the hill with the hounds, the field mostly remaining below till after some five minutes. Looking over the crest, the master announced that the hounds had gone away in full cry down the other side. Round the base of the hill went the whole field, but only to find that a return to covert had been made. The hounds, hidden by the under-growth, were heard working hard on the hill-face, their music telling they were close upon a varmint, until it became so loud and fierce that one of our oldest sportsmen gave it as his opinion that they were on a hyena and not a jackal. A break to the northward soon after showed in truth that the old sportsman's conjecture was right, for a large hyena was viewed making round the hill-side with the whole pack pressing him hard. Once or twice he was bowled over, but only to recover himself, and he eventually again took to covert on the hill. A number of the field now dismounted and tried to dislodge him with hunting crops, but he held his ground and kept the hounds at bay till he was unearthed by one of the hunters who had somehow procured a sword. He then broke finally from the hill and made for the open ground adjoining the Coorlal road. He was closely followed by the hounds, and stopped to turn on them every now and again, till finally, when pretty well exhausted, he took to the water in some salt-pans. Here he turned at bay, and was then attacked with a couple of hunting-crops by keen sportsmen who had dismounted. The hunting-crops were scarcely sufficient for him, when the gentleman with the sword again appeared on the scene, and the two combined finished him off. The hyena was a somewhat unexpected find, and though there was considerable excitement in hunting and killing him, there was a general feeling that a good run after a swift, straight jack would have been better sport. A hyena was found some years ago by the hounds on the same hill, and it will probably surprise people to learn there are beauties of this nature so close to their doors."

AN INJURED WOMAN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A Double Engagement," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XXIX.

GARNERING.

"Tis done, 'tis done—
Life's weary work is done—
Now the sad spirit leaves it clay.

At the appointed hour Sir Beresford Blane presented himself at Pincey's Hotel, encountering Lord Revaine, who came from the opposite direction. They shook hands, and entered together.

"I suppose our errand is the same," Lord Revaine said. "You wish to see Clara?"

"I am here by appointment," Sir Beresford replied. "Lady Clara said I should find her determination clear if I called at this hour."

An attendant came forward and bowed. He wished to know if the gentlemen wanted rooms, or had only called to see a friend. Sir Beresford asked to see "Lady Sutherland."

"You are too late, sir," was the reply. "Lady Sutherland left here at two o'clock. But Mr. Vesey Sutherland remained behind. He has been engaged writing letters all the afternoon. We had orders not to disturb him, and we have not done so."

"I do not know that I want to see him," said Sir Beresford in an undertone to Lord Revaine, who suggested that Vesey "might have a message for him."

"For it is my belief that they are both in it," he said.

"I can send up and ask if he wishes to see me."

"Perhaps that will be the better course."

They sent the man up, and in five minutes he came tearing down again, with all his usual equanimity gone, and his face white as driven snow.

"For Heaven's sake come up, gentlemen," he said. "Mr. Sutherland is lying in a heap upon the carpet, and we think he is dead."

They ran up to the room, taking two stairs at a time, and found a group of frightened servants gathered there. In the midst of them was Vesey Sutherland, with hands clenched, and staring eyes, and limbs drawn up, bearing witness to the violent death he had died.

"Go for a doctor, quick," cried Sir Beresford.

One of the men ran downstairs, pausing at the bar to summon the proprietor, who put an addition to the message the man had already received.

"And the police," he said. "I saw Lady Sutherland go down, and she looked horrible. She may have something to do with this. But don't breathe a word to anybody for the present."

The man promised he would not, and hurried out hatless upon his errand. In a minute or so a policeman came in, and the proprietor led him upstairs. They had taken up the dead man, and placed him on the sofa, where he lay curled up—a ghastly object.

"Who found him?" the official asked.

"The man who fetched you," the proprietor replied.

"Has anything been taken away?"

"Not yet."

"Then I must trouble you, ladies and gentlemen, to go aside until the doctor comes. And can I have a messenger to go to the inspector?"

Sir Beresford and Lord Revaine withdrew to the hearth, where the fire had long been cold, and the servants to the window. The policeman, after a brief examination of the body, took up a position where he could keep an eye on everything, and calmly awaited the arrival of the inspector.

The doctor came first, and he at once pronounced life to be extinct.

"A violent fit, or poison," he said. "Has he any friends?"

"We know him very well," replied Sir Beresford Blane, "but we have had no communication with him here."

"There was a lady here with him," the policeman said, "and she left about two o'clock to-day."

"About that time I should say he died," the doctor said.

Lord Revaine lifted his eyes to Sir Beresford's face and shuddered. He dare not give vent to his thoughts even in a whisper, but the look was sufficient, and Sir Beresford laid a hand kindly upon his shoulder.

"Bear up," he said.

"Bear up with a growing mountain upon me, Blane! It is very, very hard."

The inspector, calm and methodical, soon put in an appearance. He heard what his subordinate had to say, and ordered the room to be searched. The bottle marked "Strychnine" was one of the first things that came to light.

"Looks like suicide," he said, and with the ordinary professional haste worked upon that idea throughout.

"As you are the friends of the gentleman," he said to Lord Revaine and Sir Beresford, "perhaps you would like to engage a solicitor

to watch over the case. The inquest will be held in a day or so."

A post-mortem examination will be necessary, I suppose?" Sir Beresford said.

"The law may demand it," the inspector said; "but I have no doubt of the cause of death myself."

"Perhaps the opinion of another doctor coinciding with yours will satisfy the coroner."

The inspector thought so, and another medical man was summoned. He too had no doubts, and arrangements were made for the inquest on the morrow.

It was not until they were alone in the smoking-room, whither they adjourned, that Lord Revaine or Sir Beresford dare hint, or in any way suggest, what was in their thoughts, and then they only whispered them.

"I am afraid it was not suicide," Lord Revaine said. "Clara seems to have gone deeper and deeper still down to the very bottom of the pit of crime. This will kill my father."

"We must keep it from him as well as we can," Sir Beresford replied. "She has left for the Continent, I hear."

"Where I hope she will remain as long as she lives."

"By the way, Rachett is almost due," said Sir Beresford, after a while, "and I know he is not to be hoodwinked like this London fellow. He is not at all likely to fall into the same blunder, but we must induce him to remain quiet and forget he knows as much as he does."

"Rachett is not to be bought."

"No, but his goodwill is to be gained."

They had both prior to this sent telegrams as recorded in a previous chapter, and it will be unnecessary to follow their movements any further in this respect. Our business lies with their doings in town.

Rachett arrived about nine o'clock, and was shown into a private room Sir Beresford had engaged, where he found the baronet waiting for him alone. The news of the awful event was imparted, and, as it was feared, he did not take the suicide view of the case.

"The two were close locked together in their schemes," he said, "and this looks like getting rid of a dangerous accomplice."

"But, Mr. Rachett, think of her friends. Do not be hasty—"

"Sir Beresford, I have already shown too much yielding, and must stand fast now to my duty. If I can find Lady Clara she will be arrested."

He went and made his inquiries, and taking a cab was conveyed to the railway station. There he was informed that nobody resembling Lady Clara had gone off by the tidal train. The porters were sure of it, as the passengers had been very few, and they could remember them all. He telegraphed to the other end, and received a reply in confirmation.

"No lady under fifty crossed to-day."

It sent him wondering, and he went back to the hotel. There without hesitation he told him how he had been fooled.

"She is cleverer than we thought," he said, "and after giving out she was going to France went off quietly and hid herself in some odd corner."

He immediately set the machinery of Scotland Yard in motion, and a description of the missing lady was sent to every police station. All the detectives were on the qui vive, for the case, as much as they knew of it, had an important odour about it. The daughter of an earl "wanted" was something to bestir themselves about.

But the night passed and nothing was discovered. There was no trace of her, and when inquiries was made at Pincey's about the cab it transpired that nobody had taken the man's number. They could not remember his face either, even so much as whether he was light or dark.

"And a pretty sleepy lot you must be," said Inspector Rachett to the head attendant. "Bless me, no cab ought to come and go without having its number taken."

"That is one of your new-fangled ideas," re-

plied the attendant, loftily. "Pincey's is an old-established place and does not encourage innovations."

All that day a double search for Lady Clara was going on—by the detectives to arrest her and by Lord Revaine and Sir Beresford to get her out of the way, and the search of both was fruitless.

Nor did a quickly printed and hurriedly distributed bill asking for the cabman have any effect. The cabman refused to respond, and Lady Clara's retreat was not discovered.

Though bent upon finding her with opposite motives, the searching parties were not otherwise in harmony. Inspector Rachett met them at night, and over a little needful brandy and water talked the matter over.

"She did it very cleverly," the officer said. "I always looked upon her ladyship as a woman of brain."

"But how has she done it?" Lord Revaine asked.

"Well, my lord, if I knew that I should know where to find her. She's disguised of course, or we must have found her in a few hours."

"That is you with the police organisation of the metropolis?"

"In such a simple case, yes. You see, Sir Beresford, a lady is as a rule easily traced, especially when she is a lady. I never knew one to keep clear more than a few days. I hope, however, Lady Sutherland will not be found, but I must do my best as a matter of duty—I must do my best."

The next day the search was renewed with the same result, and Sir Beresford and Lord Revaine were both kept in a state of feverish anxiety. As the day waned and night clouded in hope gathered upon them again.

"She may escape after all," Lord Revaine said.

"Let us hope so. I would give half my fortune to secure it," Sir Beresford replied.

"The generosity of you people amazes me," Lord Revaine rejoined.

That night Rachett did not come in until late, and only stayed about a quarter of an hour. He appeared to be ill at ease, and did not indulge in a cigar as he had done on the night before. Finding he volunteered no information Sir Beresford put a question point blank to him.

"You have found a clue—what is it?"

"We have found the cabman," was the reply, "and he swears that he had put the lady and her luggage down at the station."

"Do you believe him?"

"No, for he does not speak as if it were the truth. He is too fervent, and repeats himself too often. But then if he is lying what has become of Lady Sutherland? The man could not murder her in the middle of a wintry afternoon."

"How did you know it was the fellow?" asked Lord Revaine.

"We heard of his having been absent from his work since that evening, and suspicion lighted upon him. I took him in a public-house when he was half drunk, and asked him what he had done with the lady. 'Do you mean her as I drove to the South Eastern to catch the tidal?' he asked. 'Of course I do,' I replied, seeing I had my man. 'Why, left her at the station, to be sure,' he said. Then I took him into custody."

"What are you going to charge him with?"

"He is arrested on suspicion of having murdered Lady Sutherland, and I shall ask for a remand."

"And suppose he is found innocent?"

"Then we shall set him free again."

"Without compensation?"

"Of course. What compensation would a man like that want? He'd be glad enough to get out of the hobble."

"Oh," said Sir Beresford, "I see, the law is not responsible. Well, I don't think you will get much further with him. I believe the railway officials were mistaken."

"At this end very likely, and she got out at some intermediate station, or harked back when she got to Dover. That's the track I'm on now."

And he left Sir Beresford and Lord Revaine to digest his news as best they could. They sat up late and were up again early, the latter finding a telegram informing him of the earl's death.

"Was there ever such an accumulation of misery?" he groaned, as he walked into Sir Beresford's dressing-room. "Read this."

"My dear fellow, how I sympathise with you!" replied the baronet.

"He died of a broken heart—Clara and I have killed him between us. I am Earl of Sedgely now, and no man ever stepped more unwillingly into his inheritance."

On inquiry below they learned that Rachett had not been nor sent them any message, and they knew not what to make of it. He might have either discovered what he sought or was as much in the dark as ever, and as the time passed their suspense increased and bordered on the intolerable. In the afternoon a message came urging them to hasten at once to a water-side address at Blackwall.

Thither they went as fast as a hansom cab could take them, arriving after many inquiries at the latter end of the journey about seven o'clock. Their destination was a narrow street leading down to the river, and Inspector Rachett was awaiting them.

"We have found her," he said, "and her good name is saved, my lord."

"How is that?" asked Lord Revaine.

"She is dead. We picked her up by the steamboat pier at half-past three, just as it was getting dark. We have been dragging the river since seven this morning."

"But how came you to think she was here?"

"It is a strange story, but like many strange stories of crime a true one. The cabman has confessed."

"He murdered her?"

"No. On his way to the station he had to stop by her orders at a shop in Gant Street, and when he got down he found she was leaning back, as he thought, fast asleep. On trying to wake her he found she was dead. Her hands were ungloved, and rings glittering on them tempted the man. A scheme entered his head and he carried it out. He drove her about as she was until dark, and then made his way to a narrow street he knew of by the Tower, and which he was sure to find almost deserted. He robbed her of everything, and carrying her down to the water, dropped her in at high tide."

"A horrible story!" said Lord Revaine. "But I'll not believe it. He murdered her."

"All that will have to be settled at the trial," Rachett said. "Poor creature, she is lying for the present in an old sail loft, waiting the coroner's order to remove her. Will you come with me?"

They went with him to the dingy, low-ceilinged room, smelling of tar, and with bits of old rope and canvas lying about, and there on a clean white cloth, battered and bruised, and with clothes torn by the tide, lay all that was once the handsome, impassioned daughter of the Earl of Sedgely of Strathlone.

There were no more burdens to pile upon the fallen house now, the last sheaf of misery had been gathered in, and Lord Revaine, kneeling beside his dead sister, prayed that he might live to wipe away some of the taint upon the honoured name he bore.

CHAPTER XXX.

SO RUNS THE WORLD AWAY.

And so we come to order once again,
Trouble on trouble, and pain on pain
Now are past and gone.

SIR BERESFORD BLANE had no longer any need to stay in town, and so hastened back to Powerscourt. Rhoda was glad of his return, for the accumulation of awful events was getting to be burdensome, and not yet fully recovered from her recent illness, she was very susceptible to exciting influences.

"I feel safe now," she said, as he clasped her in his arms, "with my big, strong husband near me I can smile at the thought of danger."

"All danger, and let us hope trouble, is over," he said. "We have now only to patiently live down the whisperings of the past."

"That is all," she said.

"There is a shorter way, darling. If we made your whole story known to the world—"

"No, not even now, Beresford. I will not add a whisper against the dead to what has already gone forth. People have been talking I know, and whence they have obtained this information is a marvel to me."

"It did not come from me, Rhoda. But rest assured that there is nothing really hidden for ever from the world. It may be put away for a time, but it will crop up again sooner or later. There is no occasion for us to say anything. The world that wronged you will right you."

"I have never cared for what the world said," Rhoda replied.

Sir Beresford then asked for Mat Ardent, and hearing he was in the drawing-room, went to him. The little embarrassment natural on their first meeting was quickly dispelled by the manner of the baronet, who quietly conveyed to the author the assurance that he entirely forgave the past and was anxious to forget it.

"It must never be named again," he said, "if we are to remain friends."

Doctor Lawson came in later in the evening on his way from a patient in the village. He had, it appeared, been to Strathlone that day, and he brought an account of it that was very startling.

"Half the servants already gone," he said, "and the others restless and unhappy. You know how suspicious people are. They insist that the whole family is doomed."

"I have hopes of Revaine living," Sir Beresford said.

"He has learned his lesson," Doctor Lawson thoughtfully rejoined, "and good may come out of it."

"Good appears to me to come out of everything," Rhoda said.

"Then spoke hopeful womanhood, Lady Blane," the doctor said. "I wish all the world could think the same. We should one and all be the happier for it."

"You think that any good could come out of my life?" Mat Ardent asked.

"Fountains, rivers of good," the doctor replied. "My dear fellow, you are a young man yet, all the world is before you. There is a splendid field for you to labour in."

"If ever I gain the strength," Mat said.

There was so much to talk about that they sat until a late hour. It was past twelve o'clock when the doctor, buttoned up to the throat, and with a rich cheroot between his teeth, started for home. On his way there he was meditating a project, and the result of his meditations appeared on the following morning.

He was early at Powerscourt and asked to see Mat Ardent, who came down with him, and they strolled out upon the terrace. The morning was fine and clear, and the cold air had an exhilarating effect upon both. Mat was more cheerful than he had been for many a day, and the doctor was absolutely gay.

"I have been thinking, Ardent," he said, "of taking a long holiday, or perhaps giving up practice altogether. With enough to live upon, and neither chick nor child, why should I keep labouring?"

"An idle life would never suit you," Mat said.

"Granted. But I should not be absolutely idle. First I should like to have a run abroad, say to the south of France and Italy. I have never seen these places, and the trip would be invaluable to me."

"No doubt it would be delightful."

"So I shall determine upon it. But it would never do to go alone."

"Think of marrying, doctor, eh?"

"Marrying, my dear fellow, oh, no. What woman worth having would have a battered old image like me? No; I simply want a companion, and you must come with me."

"I!" exclaimed Ardent. "I have no funds."

"Then borrow of me," said the kindly old man, "and when you have built up your body

and brushed up your brains and written a book that shall give you both name and fortune, then you can repay me."

"I must frankly confess that you tempt me," Mat replied; "but why should I take advantage of your generosity?"

"Say no more, my dear fellow," cried the doctor, "the thing is done. I shall look out a fellow to take my practice, and in a week or two we will be off. New life, new strength, new everything to both of us. What a pair of gay young dogs we will be."

"With a vast stretch of imagination," said Mat Ardent, "I may be considered one."

The plan of the doctor was approved of by Sir Beresford and Rhoda, the more so as they saw through the self-sacrifice of the worthy doctor, who with his ready intelligence had seen what would be the only antidote for the suffering of the author—travel and good companionship, away from all the surroundings that had to do with his recent past.

"It is more than kind of you," Sir Beresford said, "to give up a practice for a man whom you have but recently known."

"I shall dabble in it again when I return," the doctor replied. "If anybody wants advice gratis they can have it from me."

"But how about your successor? Will he care for that?"

"We must arrange it between us."

Mat Ardent was a man without false pride. He accepted the offer because he knew it was freely and heartily offered by a charitable, noble-hearted man, who would derive as much pleasure, and perhaps more, from the giving as Mat would from the receiving. But he at the same time resolved to settle his own pecuniary part of the business, and wrote to his publishers, who had been wondering where he was and what he was doing for many long months.

They had a half-finished story of his, and wanted to publish it. His letter, offering to write the continuation, was therefore welcome, and the price of it would suffice for the trip.

In a few days the Earl of Sedgely was quietly buried in the family vault, Lord Revaine, who came back to Strathlone the night before, alone following. It was signified to the tenants that they would not be required to attend.

After the funeral Lord Revaine took up his abode for a few days at Powerscourt, and then he declared his intention of leaving Strathlone for a year, or perhaps two, in the care of the housekeeper and two or three servants.

"Just sufficiently to keep the old place from mouldering," he said.

Then something was said about the projected trip of the doctor and Ardent, and he asked if he might join them.

"I think," he said to Mat, "that the society of a man like you would be of inestimable advantage to me."

"You are good enough to pay me that compliment," Mat replied, "but the advantages are decidedly on my side."

And so they pleasantly arranged it together, and in a week or so the trio started for the south of France. Three of the most antagonistic people a year before were to be brought together and journeying in harmony.

But life is full of surprises. The friend whom we deem will be a friend to us for ever is lost to-morrow, and a stranger, of whose existence we have barely known, takes his place. Circumstances carry us hither and thither, and no man knows on what reef he may be wrecked, what sands on which he will be cast high and dry, or the harbour he may be favoured by reaching at last.

And now the new life for Rhoda began. With the spring the county people began to call, as if there had never been any doubt in their minds that the mistress of Powerscourt was quite presentable, and such friends as the world can give us were made. To have harboured any resentment to them for their former coolness would have been a mistake.

Furthermore, Rhoda became a star among them, and men spoke of her as the belle of the county, while the women gave grudging or honest praise according to their natures.



[HOME AGAIN.]

Mothers with marriageable daughters congratulated themselves upon her being married.

When the season was at its height the Blanes went to town, and were then speedily lifted into the high and dazzling circle of the "upper ten," and ere they returned Sir Beresford had kept his word, and Rhoda was presented at Court.

Shortly after this event Sir Beresford resigned his colonelship. He wished to live for Rhoda alone. Jane received a paper with a letter from Rhoda, and in the former she read a description of the dress Rhoda wore, and by whom she was presented, and how charming she looked, all of which she read out to David Moore when he came back from his work that night.

"Ah, well," he said, "it is all very pretty, but give me a quieter life, such as we lead."

"So say I," said Jane, "but Rhoda will fall into all their fashionable doings as if she had been born to it. We were always very opposite in our aspirations."

"Both good in their way, no doubt," said David, philosophically, "Sir Beresford is satisfied with his wife, as I am with mine, and that's enough for both."

The next day a quiet brougham brought Rhoda to her sister's house, and they had a very pleasant hour together, exchanging confidences, and doting upon the baby, who was, of course, an amazing child, and so forward that everybody was surprised.

"And he is so like David," said Jane. "Oh, Rhoda, when you know the joy of having a child—"

"God send I may," Rhoda softly interposed. "I shall then have truly nothing more to long for on earth."

One sentence more, and only one, about the dark past. The wretched cabman was charged with murder and robbery, but, his story being believed, he was convicted of robbery only, and he was sentenced to five years' penal servitude; inspector Rachett prosecuted, and so conducted the case that Lady Clara was supposed to have

died of heart disease, and on this head the world never knew better, and Vesey Sutherland was supposed to have committed suicide.

The world is too busy to think long about the crimes that come under its notice, and as they had gone, the wretched man and woman, victims of their own evil natures, were almost forgotten. In polite society they were never mentioned, and no shadow of them ever crossed Rhoda's path.

She too had thoughts to draw her from them. The last great hope of her life was approaching fulfilment. A son or daughter was expected early in the autumn, and Doctor Lawson, who, with Ardant and Lord Revaine, still kept abroad, was summoned home to assist at the auspicious event.

He came post haste, and took up his residence at Powerscourt to wait for the "great day."

It came, and a son saw light, and great were the rejoicings in the mother's heart, who, as she clasped the wee thing to her heart, forgot that there had ever been a sad past, her own mistakes, the injuries she had received, everything but that a child was born to her, and the handsome father a sharer in her happiness.

"Oh, Beresford," she said, "we never before thought our happiness too great. What can we think now?"

"That we have a thousand mercies to thank God for," he replied, "and let us never more talk of our joy not being lasting. Let us believe it will be so, and live to make it so."

Bonfires were lighted in the park, and the rejoicing was general. There was more hearty good-feeling shown in a few hours than had been seen during three generations of the Sutherlands, and it was all honest. Rhoda heard the bells ringing, and the shouts, and cried with joy.

The boy was about a month old when Lord Revaine returned, bringing with him a bride—an Italian lady, whom he had been secretly admiring, and after the doctor left had proposed to her. She was handsome, vivacious, and genial, and, in her language, "fell in love" at once with Rhoda.

"I shall get into a row with the county for it," Lord Revaine said to Sir Beresford, "but I would not marry one of our women—they know too much about the past. My wife knows nothing, and is not likely to be told of things to make her unhappy."

Mat Ardant came back with his health and spirits restored, a man strong enough to bear his burden, if he could not wipe out his love. He had schooled himself to look upon the bliss at Powerscourt, without envy, to be a just sympathiser with everything there.

"But he must marry," Rhoda said to her husband one day.

"So like a woman," replied Sir Beresford. "As soon as she is settled herself she becomes a match-maker. Ardant, however, will never do your talents justice. He will not marry."

And Sir Beresford was right. Mat is too sterling to lightly love, or lightly forget, and no other woman can ever have the charm for him that Rhoda had. He loved and lost, and is content.

The doctor and he live together in a pretty little cottage about two miles from Powerscourt, where they work, each in his own way, and fish a little, and stroll a little, and read a great deal, and are two fast friends.

They go out very little, caring nothing for fashionable society, but Tom Piper rides over occasionally with an envelope addressed by his mistress, and the invitation it contains is never refused.

"It gives me no pain to see her now," says Mat Ardant.

"The happiness of those we love is the most blessed thing to look upon," the doctor says.

The doctor is very often right in what he says, and a prophecy he made about Mat's fortune is on the verge of fulfilment. The author's last book is a great success, and there is much talk of his being a rising man. Fame, though fickle to so many, will prove true to him.

[THE END.]



[DAY DREAMS.]

A DREAMER IN LOVE.

A NOVELETTE.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

CHAPTER I.

THE LOVERS' SEAT.

PRESTONBURY is proud of its natural beauties, and justly so, for you may travel far along the southern coast of England before you find a place so charmingly situated with regard to sea, cliff, and pleasant country in the rear. Nothing could be better in a quiet way, and up to the present time it has escaped the ruthless hands of the speculative builder, and the invasion of excursionists, two mercies for which it is devoutly thankful.

The houses are quaint and pretty, and are for the most part built where a particularly straight road is no object, and those who erected them did so on their own plot of ground, exercising an independent taste that, notwithstanding little individual eccentricities, has a decidedly picturesque effect as a whole.

Independence was always its great boast. It did not want the world, and the longer people outside kept away from it the better for Prestonbury. What it wanted from the outer world it would fetch on market day, the fishermen exchanging fish for their needs, and the better class putting down as good current coin of the realm as anybody, for the best people of the village had private means that supplied for themselves and enabled them occasionally to give a little help to their poorer brethren.

The leading lady of the place at the time of our story was Miss Malthus, an aged spinster, who had a pretty house half way up the cliff, and on the summit of that cliff was the celebrated lovers' seat, which could only be approached by the road passing The

Pebbles—the home of Miss Malthus aforesaid. No lover in Prestonbury ever thought of popping the question anywhere else, and so Miss Malthus was able to keep a register of the “goings on” of the young people, and she knew exactly when the proposal was made and of its success or failure long before anyone else.

“For I can tell by their faces as they come down,” she said, “and I’m glad I seldom see a sad or gloomy one.”

She was prim and quaint, was Miss Malthus, but she was not sour, hard, or disagreeable. If she was not married she saw no reason why others should not be. Perhaps she might have married if she had chosen, but— If ever the talk got so far it always abruptly ended. Whatever there was of that nature in her past she never talked about it.

With Miss Malthus lived two people—Oscar Downe and Carrie Malthus. Oscar was the son of Reginald Downe, who once resided in a house close to The Pebbles, where he died. His wife breathed her last as Oscar came into life, and the father dying, left the boy an orphan. He was then ten years of age, and Miss Malthus undertook his education and rearing.

Barely had she done this when her brother, who went wild in his youth and sailed on the sea, wrote to her saying that he had sent his little daughter per steamer in charge of the captain, who, on reaching England, would put her on the right road to Prestonbury.

“Her mother is dead,” Gordon Malthus wrote, “and I am going into a country where a man carries his life in his hand. It is not a fit place for a child. Besides, I may lose my life there. I have been a bad brother to you, but I know your heart, and you will give her a home.”

“Of course I will,” said Miss Malthus, and in a few weeks a pretty girl of eight was at The Pebbles winning her way into the heart of her aunt at a tremendous pace.

“She is so like poor Gordon,” the old maid said; “just his eyes and hair, and the same frank ways.”

From that time nothing was heard of Gordon Malthus, and he was assumed to be dead. Miss Malthus looked upon Carrie as she would a child of her own, and Oscar Downe was treated as a near relation. The boy and girl grew up together until Oscar was twenty and Carrie nineteen, very much attached to each other as a matter of course. Such a handsome youth and girl could not be much in each other’s society without having some regard for each other.

But Oscar never spoke of his love. He was a dreamy, poetical sort of being, too ready to take for granted that life was all roses. He was very contented, for there really was not so much as a cloud in the sky of his life.

He was very fond of Carrie; she was fond of him. He was fairly rich, and Carrie had all she required from her aunt, and the days passed in dreamy satisfaction. He could wait ever so long before he married—for married of course he would be some day, although he had not spoken to Miss Malthus or Carrie about it—a year, ten years, and he never doubted that when he asked Carrie to have him she would say yes.

People round about had also settled it was to be so, and they talked among themselves and occasionally to him about it, but it was never hinted to Miss Malthus. She was the leader of Prestonbury, and unless the subject were opened by her it would be a risky thing for anybody else to broach it.

One summer’s afternoon Oscar and Carrie went out for a stroll, and took the road up the cliff to the lover’s seat. They had been there many times when children, and since, and there was nothing marked in their going in that direction. Miss Malthus, who saw them depart, thought nothing of it, no more than if they had been brother and sister.

There was nobody by the seat, and Carrie sat down upon it. Oscar stretched his form at her feet, and the two sat silent for awhile, looking out to sea. Just below them half a dozen sea-gulls were lazily dipping up and down by the water, half a dozen shrimpers outward bound were slowly getting along under what to them

was full sail, and far away in the horizon the smoke of a steamer, the steamer itself invisible, could be seen.

Oscar was what people would call a handsome man. He had height and muscular development to boast of, and his features were good, but withal there was something wanting—his face was too changeless. The Oscar of to-day was the Oscar of yesterday, and as far as one could see he would be the Oscar of to-morrow. Even tempered, happy and serene, contented and unruffled, and, therefore, lacking interest for a woman.

Carrie was petite and piquant. Her face received the impression of the passing hour, and reflected its joys and woes. When she had no joys or sorrows of her own she sympathized with others, and she could feel as keenly the misery of the poor fishwoman whose husband has gone down under the sea as if she herself had lost a loved one.

It was the same with the joys of those around her, she reflected them all, save those of Oscar, who had no joys or sorrows, only an even placidity that left no more to reflect than clear, unclouded space does.

Nevertheless she liked him, and at that time Oscar was her beautiful of a man. She admired him, but it never dawned on her to analyse her heart to see if that admiration extended to love.

He was the first to speak. Awakening slowly and easily from his day-dream he looked up into her face and said:

"Carrie, shall we exchange our thoughts?"

"Mine are not worth exchanging," she replied, with a sweet smile parting her rosy lips.

"I'll risk that," he rejoined. "What were you thinking about?"

"Oh! anything and nothing," she said. "I looked at the gulls and thought of the places where they build their nests, then I looked at the shrimpers and hoped they would have a good catch, and then at the smoke yonder and wondered what steamer it was homeward bound."

"Is that all?"

"All, Oscar."

"Are you *sure*?"

"I am, indeed; I thought of nothing else."

"Then I have got the worst of the bargain," he said, "for my thoughts were more personal and interesting. I was thinking of you."

"Not a bad subject," said Carrie, laughing.

"Go on."

"I was wondering if you would be very sorry if I went away from you."

"Of course I should," replied Carrie.

"Very sorry?"

"Yes, very sorry," she replied, after a moment's pause, "but you are not going away, are you?"

"No, I am only hatching up an idea, and getting up an imaginary cause for going away. I am glad you would be sorry to lose me."

"You ought not to have asked me though," Carrie said.

"Why not?" he asked.

"Because you ought to have known," she said. "Look at the smoke of the steamer now. She is standing in. We shall catch a glimpse of her hull."

"And much good that will do us," said Oscar.

"So you would be very sorry—"

"The day is beautifully clear," said Carrie, standing up and looking steadfastly out to sea.

"Look, there's her funnels, Oscar. She is a big passenger vessel."

"So I should say," he said, lazily. "A lot of people coming home."

"I have often tried to picture the feelings of an exile returning to his native land," said Carrie, thoughtfully, "it must be an overwhelming sensation."

"You will never know it," Oscar said, "except in fancy, as you will never be an exile and will therefore never return. So you would be very—"

"Now her hull stands clear," cried Carrie, "they don't often come in so close. I only remember it once before, and that was when a passenger got into a boat and was put ashore at the point. Now I wonder if that is going to happen again."

"If it does it won't concern us," said Oscar, yawning, "we don't expect anybody by the steamer, and to get excited over it is a waste of energy. Let us go back to what we were talking about. So you would be—"

"I am sure somebody is going to land," cried Carrie. "See, there is one of the shrimping boats hauling her sail in, and the steamer is coming in close to her. What a pity it is I can't see whom it is taken in."

"So it is," said Oscar, "for then your mind would be easy. But never mind the steamer. You were saying that you would—"

"The steamer has got full steam on again," said Carrie, still looking abroad and quite oblivious of the original subject of conversation, "and the shrimper is coming back. Let us walk down to the beach and wait for her to come in."

"Why?" asked Oscar.

"To see who it is."

"But it doesn't concern us."

"No, but it is nice to have a little excitement now and then."

"I hate excitement, Carrie, and I want to have a little quiet talk with you."

"But I can't keep quiet," Carrie said. "I am quite excited, I assure you, although I can't tell why. I must go down to the beach and you must come with me. So don't be lazy, sir."

"All right, Carrie, I'll come, and I will return to the old subject by-and-bye. It will keep between us," he added, with an easy smile.

Carrie did not answer him. She was already on her way down the sloping cliff, and so they went to the beach—she first and he lounging behind.

The return of the shrimping boat had already been marked by those lounging about, and then quite a little crowd of people gathered by the spot where she was expected to touch land. Presently she ran in, and it was then seen that two sunburnt men, one about fifty years of age and the other three or four and twenty, were seated in the bow with their eyes eagerly fixed upon the people assembled.

Carrie and Oscar stood behind the main group and at first could see little of the strangers, but as they came through, followed by two men, each bearing a trunk, the strangers' property, Carrie's eyes were fixed upon the elder with an amazed and terrified look.

He too looked at her, and drew near with a visible trembling of his whole body, and when they were close to each other he suddenly pulled up.

"Is your name—Carrie?" he asked.

"Father!" she cried, and threw herself into his arms. "Oh, not dead—not dead, thank Heaven!"

CHAPTER II.

MARTIN THEORY.

OSCAR DOWNE was too petrified to do more than stare at father and daughter looked in each other's arms, oblivious in their great joy of being in a public place, with a wondering crowd around him, and it fell to the young stranger's lot to make a suggestion wanting on the occasion.

"It's The Pebbles where Miss Malthus lives, isn't it?" he said. "Don't you think we had better get them up there? He's pretty overcome, I know, and so must she be, poor thing."

"You are a friend of his?" said Oscar, hurriedly.

"Yes. Martin Theory is my name. We've made our money and come home together."

"Oh, that is it," said Oscar, vaguely, still too bewildered to make any decided movement.

"Yes, and if you will show me where The Pebbles is I'll take him up and you take the girl in tow."

"Miss Carrie Malthus is her name," said Oscar, rather haughtily.

"Beg pardon, I'm sure," said Martin Theory, "meant no harm. I come from a rough country, you know."

"I don't know," said Oscar, curtly.

Somehow he did not quite like the arrival of these men. Gordon Malthus had so long been considered dead that he was seldom named, and his turning up just then was not quite palatable. As for bringing a stranger with him of the rough order of beings Martin Theory appeared to be, that, in Oscar's opinion, was a decided bad taste.

But he hid his feelings, and having urged the father and daughter to become more composed, he gave Gordon Malthus a sort of left-handed welcome and asked Carrie to take his arm.

"We must get up to The Pebbles," he said, "all Prestonbury is out to look at us."

"You go on first," said Carrie, clinging to her father. "I cannot leave him for a moment."

Oscar bowed and went forward to prepare Miss Malthus, which he did by walking into the parlour where she sat and announcing him straight away.

"Miss Malthus," he said, "your brother's come home. He is with Carrie outside."

"Oscar, you must be jesting," said the old maid, with a quivering lip.

"No, it is true, and here they are coming in at the gate."

Miss Malthus rose up and with tottering step got as far as the door, when she found herself confronted by the big, bronzed, bearded man, who folded her in his arms and called her "dear Phyllis."

"Older," he said, as he held her at arms length, "older, decidedly, but the same dear, kind face."

"I should not have known you, Gordon," she murmured.

"And so true to your trust," he said, "you have made Carrie into the very semblance of what you were in days gone by."

"I hope she will be a better woman," Miss Malthus said.

All this time Martin Theory had stood in the passage without, Gordon Malthus barring his entrance to the room. He was not in a hurry, however, for he had entered into a conversation with Carrie, that was at least animated. He had a rough and rugged way of expressing himself, but he was hearty and honest, and desired to be agreeable.

Oscar Downe thought he was guilty of a great piece of impertinence, and would have told him of it if he had not been a friend of Gordon Malthus.

"Come in, all of you," said the old maid.

"Who is this—a friend, Gordon?"

"A good and gallant friend," replied Gordon.

"I owe him my life more than once—"

"Oh, nonsense," said Martin.

"But it is not nonsense, young fellow, and I won't have you shirking your dues."

"I did no more than any other fellow would have done—no more than you would have done yourself."

"At any rate we will have the story by-and-bye," said Miss Malthus. "I am sure I could not listen to it now, for I am quite bewildered, and you must wait some tea."

"Ay, some tea," said Gordon; "nothing like it. What would we have given a hundred times for a cup of it on the Rocky Mountains—eh, Martin?"

"A cup full of gold," said Martin.

"A barrow load, you mean?"

"Carrie, dear," said Miss Malthus, "you see after the tea. I am so excited and happy that I can do nothing, and you must be the same, so why should I trouble you? Oscar, you are the most composed, will you go and talk to Jenny? Three teaspoonfuls extra, and the large silver teapot, if you please. We shall want the big cake made for Sunday too."

Oscar bowed and got out of the room as quickly as he could. Each moment his dislike to the arrivals increased. They threatened to break in upon the even serenity of The Pebbles, and that was not to the taste of the idle dreamer. Beyond that he had no feeling in the matter. He was not at all jealous of Martin, for of course Carrie would take no possible interest in such a bear.

Not when he returned to the parlour and found Carrie talking with much animation alter-

nately to her father and Martin Theory did he see any reason to alter his original opinion. It was her duty to be courteous to the stranger, and Carrie was always courteous, particularly to inferiors, only the young fellow seemed to take it too much as a matter of course, and to put himself on too familiar a footing. But then he came from a country where all men and women are equal and Jack thinks himself as good as his master and a little better.

The active Jenny, the one domestic at The Pebbles—a sort of hobbledoy boy gardeher and groom combined did not count—after being taken aback for a moment, like a ship meeting with a violent gust of head wind, rallied and served tea with a promptitude and neatness that did her the highest credit, and over the social cup that “cheers and not inebriates” Gordon Malthus told his story.

“I was very hard up,” he said, “when I sent Carrie home. Things had gone awfully wrong with me. My poor wife died, and some land I owned was overrun and devastated by Indians, so I threw up the place and joined a party going west in search of gold. I knew Carrie was all right, both as to the people who had charge of her to bring her here and the reception you would give her.”

“That, dear Gordon, you would have no doubt of,” said Miss Malthus.

“I had none, as I tell you. Well, the party I joined made for the Rocky Mountains, where after no end of useless toil and suffering we were fallen upon by a party of Pawnees, who slaughtered half our company and took the rest of us, contrary to their usual custom, into a sort of slavery. The chief took a fancy to me, and he was good enough to allow me to live on condition of acting as a valet. Fancy being a valet to a savage, and a very unreasonable old savage too; but I bore up, for I thought of Carrie, and for her sake I hoped to live and get home again.

“I spent five years, moving here and there in this degrading servitude, without having a single chance of escape. We were watched night and day, and those of our party who did make a run for it were overtaken and tortured before being dispatched with a tomahawk. This was done in the presence of the survivors as a lesson to them, and I at least was wise enough to take it. I resolved to make sure of my escape before I attempted it.

“The time came at last. A tribe of Blackfeet went to war with our masters and harassed them frightfully, causing them to move here and there with scarce a day’s rest. They got wearied, relaxed their vigilance over us, and I and half-a-dozen others ran for it and got free. Then followed two years of a hunted life among the mountains. All was turmoil and war at the points we hoped to escape by, and we walked about with our lives in our hands, living on what we could snare and such roots as we could find. Then the Indians in a body moved away, and we made for the west coast.”

“And on your way you fell in with my party,” said Martin.

“That’s so.”

“And right glad we were of you, for we were a lot of wild young dunderheads, without any real scientific knowledge, and we should have blundered about, missing the rich tracks where the gold was, and working like niggers where there was none, but for your knowledge of geology.”

“It was always a favourite study of Gordon’s,” said Miss Malthus, with pride, “and I am sure he was useful to you.”

“Invaluable,” Martin said.

“Well,” said Gordon Malthus, “to make a long story short we found gold and we gathered it in like sand. We all grew rich, and I, with the experience of my old ill luck upon me, wrote nothing about it home, but waited until I had enough, and then started back. Nothing would suit this young Martin but he must come with me.”

“Of course,” said Martin. “Were we not the only two close friends in the whole band?”

“And while the others fought and quarrelled did we not keep aloof and hold together?”

“And when you talked of your pretty home did not I say I should like to see it?”

“You did,” said Gordon Malthus, “and you were very anxious to see Carrie too.”

“Like his impudence,” thought Oscar Downe.

“What more natural?” said Martin, appealing to the ladies. “He was never tired of singing Carrie’s praises, and I know he was the man who always spoke the truth, and I wished to see her.”

“I trust you are not disappointed,” said Carrie, with a merry laugh.

“I am not,” he replied, with an emphasis that made all but Oscar laugh also.

His calling her Carrie without the prefix of the Miss would have been an impertinence in any ordinary man, but it was as natural for him to speak thus as it was with people in the olden time, who called nobles by their Christian names and were never thought impertinent or offensive.

Oscar Downe alone saw anything wrong in it, but how could he interfere when Carrie accepted it with perfect good humour, and Miss Malthus received it as something novel but perfectly correct?

“Your life must have had a deal of freedom in it,” the old maid said.

“A little too much,” replied her brother, making a grimace. “Every man did as he liked, and when his liking did not tally with the wishes of others there came hot words and blows. I’ve known a life to be taken because a man insisted on sitting upon a particular log.”

“And because he refused to drink with a man he disliked,” Martin said.

“Or for no reason at all in fact,” said Gordon Malthus. “But we steered clear of all trouble, and here we are, thank God, among those we love in a land of peace. Carrie, darling, come a little nearer to me, for I must hold your hand in mine awhile. Oh! what an age it seems since we parted—you then a pretty little bud.”

“And now such a beautiful flower,” said Martin, softly.

It would have been fulsome praise from many but not from him, it fell so spontaneously without an effort from his lips. In fact, it came from his heart. Martin Theory never said anything he did not mean.

Oscar Downe alone was de trop among the party. He knew little of the world and nothing of the world the two adventurers came from, and now that he saw what men it made he did not wish to know more. The perfect sang froid of Martin irritated him, and feeling it impossible to join in the conversation he rose after tea and said he had business in the village.

Nobody demurred to his going, although he expected that Carrie would have pressed him to remain at home, and he went away in a humour that was quite new to him. Hitherto he had lived such an unruffled life that he knew nothing of the darker passions that lay slumbering beneath the surface, and he that night discovered he possessed a soul that if lashed by opposing elements could run riot like a raging sea.

“That young fellow lives with you, doesn’t he?” said Gordon Malthus to his sister.

“Yes,” she replied. “He is the son of a neighbour who died and asked that I would take him to my home.”

“He has given you some trouble, I suppose?”

“None. Oscar is the best of tempers.”

“Is he?” said Gordon Malthus, drily. “He has been good because he has had no temptation to be bad. I should not be surprised if that young gentleman gave you some trouble ere long.”

CHAPTER III.

THE STORM RAISED.

A WEEK passed and Gordon Malthus and his friend were fully settled at Prestonbury. Gordon lived at The Pebbles, and Martin, as a thing he insisted upon, after the first two days took apartments at a house in the village.

“There is no knowing how long I may stay,” he said.

“You may make it your home,” Miss Malthus suggested.

“I should have thought it too dull for such an enterprising spirit as yours,” said Oscar, superciliously.

They were all in the garden together enjoying the cool of the evening, and Oscar had sat in their midst moody and silent. During the past two days he had sought in vain to get a tête-à-tête with Carrie but had always been foiled. Her father was constantly by her side.

Martin had large, dark, dreamy, good-tempered eyes, and as Oscar made his unnecessary remark he turned then upon him with an easy look of good-nature combined with contempt.

“I don’t think you know much of my thoughts,” he said.

“I might guess one or two perhaps,” Oscar returned.

“Don’t,” said Martin, easily. “It would be a waste of time. My thoughts are not worth bothering about. Are they, Carrie?”

He had already got into the habit of appealing to her in small matters, and it made Oscar wince to find how pleased it made her. She declined laughingly to put a value upon Martin’s thoughts, and said she had quite trouble enough with her own.

Gordon Malthus, whose eyes had been fixed upon Oscar with a keen interest, now filled his pipe and suggested a stroll.

“We might go as far as the summit of the cliff,” he said. “It is many a day since I saw the lovers’ seat.”

“It is unchanged,” Miss Malthus said, “and seems to me like the brook in one thing—‘Lovers come and lovers go, but the seat keeps there for ever.’”

“Bravo, Phyllis,” said her brother, “that’s good. You have improved upon the old song I think.”

They went up to the lovers’ seat, Martin keeping by Carrie’s side, and Oscar sulkily falling in the rear alone. It was a beautiful evening, and as the light died away and the stars came out the scene had a rich sadness in it that set them all a thinking. Oscar and Gordon Malthus lay on the turf and Carrie and Martin sat upon the seat. Miss Malthus walked up and down, because she had doubts about the dew.

“I am getting old,” she said, “and must take care of my old bones.”

Nobody talked much, but now and then a few sparks of conversation were struck, but thinking seemed to be most in favour until they were homeward bound, when their tongues were loosened.

“I like that lovers’ seat,” said Martin, suddenly. “It is the prettiest spot on earth. The view is as good as anything I ever saw, and better.”

“Not so wild and rugged as some places we have visited,” said Gordon Malthus.

“No, but richer. More mellow, if I may use the term,” Martin said. “I was never in a place I liked so well. The little good there is in me was surely uppermost as I sat there to-night.”

“And I felt happy too,” said Carrie. “I hope our joy is to last.”

“Why should it not?” asked Martin, eagerly.

“I don’t know,” Carrie replied, “except that we are told no joy in this life is lasting.”

“If we do not mar our joy,” Oscar interposed, “others do it for us.”

They did not answer him, and he said no more. The others talked gaily all the way home.

Martin Theory took a great fancy to that seat, and he was often up there, but when alone it seemed to have lost nearly all its charms. Then searching for a cause for this he found that Carrie’s presence was necessary to make his joy complete, and so within the week he found that he had given his heart to Carrie, and could not hope to live happily without her.

It was a great discovery, a tremendous revelation, and it appalled him, for he felt that Carrie as a woman was as high above him as a man as the heavens are above the earth.

His first impulse was to start away at once and return to the Rocky Mountains, there to bury his love in excitement, and he got as far as putting his portmanteau in order, but then he changed his mind.

"Why should I run away?" he said, "that is not the act of a man. It will be leaving her to that Oscar Downe—a maudlin, namby-pamby jack-a-napes. I often feel as if I could not keep my hands off him."

It will be seen that the rivalry was now fairly established. Instinctively the men hated each other, and if Oscar had been as fiery as Martin they would soon have come to a settlement satisfactory or otherwise.

But Oscar, although annoyed by the pleasure Carrie took in Martin's society, felt pretty sure of her. He had vanity (who has not?), and he called to mind the many happy years they had spent together, her regard for him, and if there was a slight change now in her bearing towards him it was only natural.

He blamed himself for one thing, and that was not having proposed to her before. But he had been so sure of her, and had been content to dream of prospective happiness instead of hastening on to the reality. That, however, was his nature. He was a born procrastinator, and he was early paying the penalty of that most wretched flaw in his disposition.

At the end of the week, just before Martin had made his great discovery, Oscar Downe girded on the armour of resolution and proceeded to do battle for himself. He became more attentive to Carrie, attending upon her more than he had done since her father's return, and put on his best coat, or, in other words, assumed his most smiling demeanour.

Carrie was not sorry to see the change, for she had been vexed by his want of sympathy in the general rejoicing, and she returned readily to her old way with him. She called him "dear Oscar," as she had done a thousand times before, but now it had a significance to him to which hitherto it had in a great manner been a stranger.

Miss Malthus did not notice the change, but Gordon Malthus did, and he objected to it. He knew something of men and the world, and he interpreted Oscar's motives as clearly as if Oscar had revealed them to him. But he did not interfere.

"Opposition," he said, "would be fatal. Carrie is a woman, and if I say hard things of him she will straightway fall in love with him."

This may not be and is not the case with all women, but some are certainly stimulated by opposition, and Gordon Malthus proved himself to be a man of wisdom. Carrie was not then in love with her old playmate, nor dreamt of being so.

One day Gordon Malthus and Martin went out for a little deep-sea fishing. Carrie was to have gone too, but at the last moment Miss Malthus was attacked by a severe headache—an old enemy of hers—and Carrie was obliged to remain at home.

Here was an opportunity for Oscar Downe, and he had ready wit and resolution enough to seize upon it.

In the afternoon, Miss Malthus having got over the brunt of the attack and fallen asleep, Carrie went into the garden, taking some needle-work with her. In one quiet corner there was an ivy-covered bower, a favourite lounging place, and thither she went. Five minutes afterwards Oscar joined her.

She was not particularly surprised, or pleased, or displeased to see him, but accepted his coming as a matter of course, but he was rather pale, and she asked him if he was unwell.

"I have no bodily ailment," he said, "but I am not happy."

She looked at him in surprise now, and saw that his eyes were fixed upon her with an expression she had never seen before. She shrank from it with a half-dreaded idea of its meaning in her mind.

"Not happy?" she echoed.

"No," he said. "Carrie, dear Carrie, I want to ask you to recall something to your mind.

Do you remember that day when you and I sat upon the lovers' seat watching the smoke of the steamer that brought your father home?"

"Assuredly I do, Oscar. It is not more than a week ago."

"Can you recall anything I said that day?"

"I daresay I could. We talked of many things."

"But I want you to recall something very particular."

Carrie bent her eyes down thoughtfully, and gave a minute to meditation on the subject, but nothing came of it.

"I am sorry, Oscar," she said, "that I can recall nothing very particular. It is very unkind of me, no doubt, but you must remember what an exciting day it was."

"True, Carrie. Well, I must recall the subject, I suppose. I asked you if you would be sorry if I went away."

"Oh, I remember that," said Carrie, smiling, "but you were jesting."

"But can you not guess the object of the question?"

Again Carrie reflected, but could come to no decided idea. He was getting angry now, for he felt he had already got his answer, but he stemmed the torrent of his wrath, and pressed his suit.

"Carrie," he said, "I am going to say to-day what I ought to have said then. We have been together now for nearly ten years, and you have so grown upon me that you are now part of myself, and—"

"Oscar," Carrie hurriedly said, "I think I must go in. Miss Malthus may be awake."

"You cannot go until you have heard me," he said, barring the way.

"No, you had better not speak"—Carrie's distress increased with every word—"I am not sure I understand you, but if I do I should be very sorry—"

"Sorry that I love you?"

"No, not with the old love."

"What old love? Mine has been the same throughout—at least, for years."

"I mean a brotherly love, Oscar."

His brows bent and flashed beneath their shade. He was almost sure that his cause was lost and it drove him nearly mad, but still he controlled himself and went on.

"Mine is not a brotherly love," he said, "it is something deeper and better."

"No, no, Oscar."

"But I say yes, yes. It is the love that binds men and women together for time, and as some believe through eternity. I ask you, Carrie, to be my wife."

She bent her head and covered her face with her hands for a moment without replying. Then she looked up and he heard his doom.

"I have never thought of you in that way," she said, "nor ever could. My love for you has been sisterly from the first and will ever remain so. The discovery I have made to-day has inexpressibly shocked and pained me. I wish from my heart that you had never spoken."

"Perhaps if I had spoken ten days ago it would have been different."

His voice was hard and cold and metallic in its tone. He seemed to be suddenly frozen up—all the warmth had died out of him.

"What has ten days ago to do with it, Oscar?—It would have been the same then as now."

"I do—not—believe it."

It was a deliberate insult to her, and she drew herself proudly up and signed for him to stand out of her path.

"I cannot talk any further with you now," she said.

"You are offended?" he replied.

"You have insulted me," she rejoined. "I spoke the truth."

"If Martin Theury had not come—"

He stopped short, for the hitherto quiet girl suddenly became an outraged woman. Her eyes flashed and her lip quivered with scorn.

"How dare you?" she cried. "By what right do you pretend to know the secret of my heart?"

"But you love him?" sneered Oscar.

"I do not deny it," she answered, with withering contempt. "Are you satisfied now?" And then he let her go.

CHAPTER IV.

THE END OF THE GAME.

FROM that time a change came over Oscar Downe. He did not leave The Pebbles or show any different feeling towards its inmates except that he was more gay in his demeanour than he had ever been before. The change lay in his general mode of living.

Hitherto a dreamer he now became an active man, taking long walks, practising swimming, and spending many hours learning how to manage a boat, an art he had up to that time most unaccountably neglected.

He chose for his tutor an old seafaring man, Mat Chadley, who knew every rock and sand upon the coast, and he proved himself to be a most assiduous student. Mat's expression was that he learnt everything like wildfire.

To Carrie, Oscar, when he met her alone, was gravely courteous, as if his object were to convey to her an expression of regret for having forgotten himself on that day in the harbour. If it was so, he succeeded to perfection. Carrie forgave him freely and even felt sorry for him. The pursuits he was engaged in she looked upon as means of distraction in which he sought to forget his love.

As time passed he returned to the old brotherly feeling, and by degrees won the friendship of Martin Theury and gained the respect of Gordon Malthus. He was so hearty and genial to both that they felt they had done him an injustice and under-estimated his better nature. To make amends for this they extended a warm kind of friendship and made much of him in return.

Meanwhile Carrie and Martin were drawn much together, with the inevitable result. Their hearts had long beat in sympathy, and their lips could not withhold the secret. He proposed in his honest fashion and she accepted with the frankness of an innocent heart. She loved him and why should she be prudish and assume a doubt when no doubt existed? So she said yes, and there was great rejoicing at The Pebbles.

Oscar Downe was very warm in his congratulations. He told Carrie that he was very pleased both in public and in private, and to Martin he said that of all men in this world he would have chosen him to marry his "Sister Carrie."

Martin thanked him and said he would endeavour to make her happy.

He had bought a piece of land near The Pebbles on which a house was being erected, and as Oscar showed some architectural taste he was often consulted about the work going on. He gave his advice cheerfully, and seemed as anxious about the house as he who owned it.

"Such a dove of a girl," he said, "ought to have a pretty nest."

"That's a good idea," said Martin, "and a kind one."

While this work was going on Oscar bought a boat of his own and was out much alone, sailing and fishing. After a time Gordon Malthus would occasionally go with him, then Martin, then both together, just as it might happen that either or both had nothing to do ashore, or would be in the way at The Pebbles, where already immense preparations for the wedding were going on.

Within a week of the important day Martin and Oscar went out one morning alone.

It was a late autumn day, rather cold, with a chopping wind knocking about the sea. Mat Chadley helped them to get the boat ready, and his advice was not to go too far away.

"For it may come roaring down almost at any minute, gentlemen," he said; "there's no knowing what lies to windward."

"We are not going far," Oscar said.

Then turning to Martin, he added:

"If you see anything to fear don't go."

"I see none," replied Martin, laughing.

"I've been used to a rough life and don't mind rough weather. Besides, you can manage your boat to perfection."

"No man better," said Mat Chadley.

They ran the boat down and leaped in as she shot into the sea. The square mainsail and foresail were set with a reef in the former and Oscar took the helm.

"I think," he said, "we will go out by the Blackrocks, we shall get less wind there."

"I thought the Blackrocks were dangerous," said Martin.

"To those who have not studied them," Oscar said, "but I know every reef and can sail within a foot of every one of them. My memory does credit to Mat's teaching."

He was in the highest spirits, more like a boy let loose for a holiday than a man out for an hour's enjoyment with a friend. As the boat bounded over the waves he laughed and sang so boisterously that Martin knew not what to make of him.

"You are gay this morning," he said.

"Very gay," replied Oscar.

"One would think you were enjoying some good joke."

"So I am, a joke in perspective. You shall see what it is presently."

The Blackrocks lay about two miles to the east of Prestonbury, and they were worthy of the name they bore. Black in looks, and dangerous to those at sea. At high tide they peeped no more than a few feet above the waves on a calm day, and when the wind was high foam alone marked their whereabouts.

At low tide they were still surrounded by water, for they were ugly, razor-backed masses of stone that had their foundation in the sand fully fifty feet down.

On this day and at the hour the boat started the tide was almost at its highest point, and nothing but foam about them could be seen.

As they drew near Martin, who had some little knowledge of seamanship, saw that the place was dangerous, and he suggested the advisability of giving it a wide berth.

"I know where I am going," said Oscar, briefly.

They drew nearer, and Martin saw that there was foam to the right and left and apparently no passage for the boat.

"It would be madness for us to risk running a passage there," he said. "Put the helm up."

"No, I must have my little joke," said Oscar, and then the laughter suddenly died out of his face and ferocity took its place.

Martin saw the change, and knew what it meant. He had seen many dangerous men during his wanderings abroad, and he knew that he had one with him now.

"Put up the helm," he cried, as he dashed from his seat in the bow towards Oscar in the stern.

"I won't!" yelled Oscar. "I'll have my joke, and that is—we drown together. I've fooled you all and brought you to your fate at last. That white-faced cat at home may mew for you in vain. There will be no wedding-day."

"Scoundrel!" cried Martin, and closed with him.

Then a furious struggle began, and Martin tried in vain to wrench the tiller from the grasp of Oscar, but the man, with a latent devil in him, held on, and the boat ran quickly on to the rocks and struck.

"Success!" shrieked Oscar, and the next moment the furious sea beat his frail craft to pieces and both men went down.

Fortunately for Martin they did not remain locked in each other's arms. Oscar let go, for however desirous he might be of drowning his successful rival, he had an instinctive desire to save his own life.

Both rose to the surface and fought for breath among the foam.

Martin was a strong swimmer, but he was half stunned and blinded by the spray, and felt that the chances of escape were small. He thought of Carrie and praying for his life struck out boldly, trusting to Providence to guide him into calmer water.

How long he fought with the waves he never could estimate from his personal experience, but he did gain smooth water when the voice of a man gladdened his ear.

"This way, sir, this way," and he knew it was the voice of old Mat Chadley.

A rope was cast close to him and he held on.

"I saw your danger, sir," he said, "and I followed you. How could Mr. Oscar have got so much out of his course?"

"Where is he?" asked Martin, gasping.

The question he ignored, for even at that moment he wished to spare his foe.

"There he is, sir, just coming over the reef."

"Steer for him."

Mat steered, but it was too late. Oscar Downe was exhausted. He kept up just long enough to know that his rival was saved, and then with his soul bursting with agony sank under the sea.

"A dangerous man, as I used to think him," said Gordon Malthus. "You have had a narrow escape, Martin."

"I have, thanks be to God for my life being spared," said the young fellow, doffing his hat.

The two were now walking up and down the lawn, and it was just twenty-four hours since the tragic event by the Blackrocks. There were grief and mourning at The Pebbles, and the wedding was postponed.

"It was wise of you to keep the story to yourself," continued the elder man. "Better that all the world should think it was an accident."

"To be sure," Martin replied.

"Your wedding will not take place for two or three months. That will be a trial."

"Better bear it than let Carrie know what was hidden in her old playmate."

And so it was settled. The two men kept the secret, and Prestonbury never knew, nor did anyone else at The Pebbles ever know the true story of that brief mad sail upon the sea. The time soon passed, and Martin, in the joy of his union with his darling Carrie, speedily forgot the sacrifice he had made.

The body of Oscar never came up from the sea—the grave he designed for another became his own eternally.

WATCH MAKING.

UNTIL lately women have been excluded from the practice of watch-making in England, but concurrently with, or in consequence of, recent able advocacy for their participation in this occupation, they are now admitted to it in considerable numbers, both in London and in the provincial centres of the industry. It has been alleged by many that the watch trade will locally flourish or languish in proportion as the employment of women in it is fostered or discouraged, and prosperity will largely depend upon the simplicity of aim in the production of a watch, and upon the utilisation of machinery for the same purpose.

It is a novelty of some ten or twelve years' standing to find watches produced generally by any other labour than could be adapted to hand tools; but it is in America that the most systematic application of machinery has so far taken place, where in a few large establishments machine-wrought watches are made in a series of connected and uniform processes. It is in America also that the simplicity of aim or the unity of purpose, by which the watch is regarded only or primarily as a time-keeper, has been most closely realised.

In the infancy of the art, it has been pertinently observed by a learned writer upon the subject, the idea of the time-keeper was mixed up in the artisan's mind with all sorts of fantastic notions. Instead of a mechanism simply for the measure of time, the watchmaker was constantly striving after the production of something novel, curious

and astonishing. The forms and sizes of watches were innumerable. Some were as large as saucers, while others were of the most marvellous minuteness. In form they took the shape of the pear, the almond, the melon, the tulip, the shell, the bird, the cross, the skull, the coffin, and other cheerful or memorial emblems; and they were inserted in such commodities as snuff-boxes, finger-rings, shirt-studs, bracelets, and saddles. Even when these external eccentricities and extravagances had been largely cast aside, the interior construction of the watch remained complicated with all manner of objects other than simple time-keeping. Striking watches, repeating watches, speaking watches that imitated voices, were elaborately produced, as well as watches that professed to perform the chronological and astronomical functions of the almanac and calendar. All these varieties, however curious, were dragged upon the works, and detracted from the simple essential purpose of the mechanism.

As the conception of utility grew into greater distinctness, there gradually arose as a particular application of it the idea of the watch as a simple time-keeper, and a practical concentration of effort to perfect this object alone. The appendages of the past were one by one abandoned in watches of the best construction; and fewness and simplicity of the parts, combined with the automatic exactness of machinery, came to be adopted as a necessary principle of excellence and permanency of precision.

It is a matter of experience that although every part of a watch must be absolutely accurate, no part must fit perfectly. To run freely each pivot must have a little play, "like a horse in harness;" otherwise the least bit of dirt or the least expansion of the metal would stop or impede the delicate machinery. In like manner every jewel hole is left a little larger than the pivot which is to revolve in it, for the "side shake," or lateral oscillation; and every shaft or axle a little short, for what is known as the "end shake." The tiny gauges which in a system of watch-making machinery measure all the parts make allowance for these demands; and this they do with an ease and accuracy unattainable by human brains and human fingers.

The completion of the watch, however, cannot be effected by machinery; and after it has done its utmost there still remain numerous processes which involve more or less of hand-work, and in which the peculiar delicacy of female manipulation has an opportunity of vindicating its value. As a rule, however, women have not yet appropriated those parts of watch-making which require the highest degree of mechanical knowledge. The more difficult work, and the most remunerative, is still generally in the hands of men, who, it is said—and we leave it as a suggestive remark for our readers—are more ingenious, more thoughtful, and contriving in cases of strangeness and emergency, than their female colleagues and competitors.

FACETIÆ.

FORCE OF HABIT.—A friend asked Colonel Charles Coghlan of the P. O. W.'s T.—"Going to Epsom this year usual way by Sutton, eh?"—"Why, Suttonly!" answered Colonel Coghlan. Punch.

MUSIC HALL MOTTO (for a club card-room).—"You're always sure to catch 'em with a whist, whist, whist!" Punch.

COOL.

LITTLE WIFE (log.): "You know I always say a bargain's a bargain, my dear; so if you'll buy me that dear little bonnet we saw yesterday I won't flirt half so much with Harry Stevenson to-night." Judy.

HEAR! HEAR!

The Irish imagine themselves to be "the finest peasantry in the world;" not so fine as Scotch though, because everyone is aware that they are all "Pict" men. Judy.

IT IS A FACT.

(Not so generally known as it might be.)
That the bolster of domestic use, although it does not belong to the human species, yet comes under the head of rational beings.

That the best way to "serve" a dinner properly is—to eat it.

That to reside in "the attics" is low enough, but that the ground floor is a-basement.

That a baron of beef frequently subsides into a baron-ate.

That men often find fault with a girl's figure, but when the young lady has a few thousand pounds of her own they generally find that the figure is nearly right.

That if you desire to make your coat last, it is a good plan to make your trousers and waist-coat first.

That it is only right for you to settle as much upon your dear wife as you possibly can, because, don't you see? her second husband may not have a sixpence.

That the best "pledge" of real love is—"pop-ping" the question. Judy.

THE PORK LOVER'S LAMENT.

I DARE not eat
A dead pig's meat,
Though not of creed of Moses,
For, oh, I fear,
From what I hear,
That horrid trichinosis! Judy.

CRITICS ON SHORE.

YOUNGEST LITTLE THING: "Are those tight Jersey things Charley and Ted have got on what they call their rig-out?"

ELDEST LITTLE THING (well-informed): "Yes, dear."

YOUNGEST: "Then what's an outrigger?"

ELDEST: "The person who makes the rig-out."

[Question settled. Pass on!] Judy.

MY UNCLE'S JOKE.—When may a man be said to pledge his veracity?—When he exclaims, "a-pawn my word." Judy.

A CENSUS CON.

WHAT celebrated Flemish painter does the interval between the censuses represent?—Teniers. Ten years, eh? Judy.

A DIFFICULT QUESTION.

SQUIRE'S DAUGHTER: "What is this we hear about your father and mother quarrelling so, Peggy?"

PEGGY: "They've each had a little money left 'em, miss, and I think feytherhe wants the lot. Anyways, they can't agree nohow whether her money is his'n or his hern, or his'n and hers hern." Fun.

Is Bradlaugh's a sliding seat? It's a slippery one at all events, with a good deal of "row" about it. Fun.

REMARKABLE DISCOVERIES.

THE full returns of the recent Census are of course not to hand; still, from those which are already completed, one is able to form a fair idea of what the total result will be, and the following may be confidently accepted as some of its leading features:

There are now in the United Kingdom unmarried ladies who look considerably older than they state themselves to be.

There were quite five hundred thousand gentlemen absent at midnight on the 3rd of April, who undoubtedly ought to have been at home.

There has been a remarkable decrease in the number of "domestic servants," and a proportionate increase in the number of "lady helps" and "assistants."

The number of "workmen," also, is very much less than formerly, whilst the number of "artists" is a good deal greater.

Several thousands of "heads of families," who described themselves as sane, appeared in the eyes of the enumerators to be utter idiots.

The quantity of decayed merchants, briefless barristers, coal agents, and unemployed philanthropists, is simply appalling. Fun.

HISTORY.

Who were the two Vi-kings who occupied the throne of England since the Conquest?—Henry VI. and Edward VI. Fun.

A HOME-THURST.

UNCLE (sharply): "You should send that boy to boarding-school—I was sent before I was his age."

BOY (timidly): "Were you a good boy at home, uncle?" Fun.

THE GERMAN PRESS.—Conscription. Moonshine.

IT ISN'T HIS FAULT.

HOTEL CLERK: "Sir Frederick Roberts. Show Sir Frederick into the Commercial Room."
SIR F.: "The Commercial Room?"

HOTEL CLERK: "Oh, you needn't fear. They won't mind. Everybody knows you used to be a general, but you'll easy pass muster now as a 'traveller'!" Moonshine.

WE should like to ask the Speaker if the swearing-in of a member is accompanied by language unfit for publication. Moonshine.

AN OFFER.

YOUNG ISAACS (to indignant purchaser of three boxes a penny): "Won't strike, guv'nor? See here—strikes on my cord'roys like winkin'. Don't know what more you want. Take the last dozen for threepence; I'm always here when you want a light. Won't, won't yer. Well, make it half a dollar and them old tweeds, and you shall have the cord'roys too!" Moonshine.

WHAT IS FAME?

If it was not our own redoubtable auntie, it was surely her Irish sister, who remarked how funny it was that a fuss was only made about great people on the days of their death and never on the days of their birth.

Funny Folks.

"PATH OF PEACE."—Not the warring homoeopath and allo-path. Funny Folks.

A JENNER-OUS SPIRIT.

SIR WILLIAM JENNER has been elected president of the Royal College of Physicians. His election was quite unanimous—in fact, it was a case of spontaneous Jenner-ation.

Funny Folks.

DRESS AND NO RE-DRESS.

IRRITATED MAMMA: "No, it does not fit as if he had been born in it—it doesn't fit at all; and I expect the money back."

MR. IKEMO: "But shelp me—"

I. M.: "Your advertisements say, 'Money returned if not approved.'"

MR. IKEMO: "So they do, ma, tear, so they do; but your money vas approved—it vas very goot money!" Funny Folks.

IN JEST OR IN EARNEST?

(Incident at the opening of the Natural History Museum, South Kensington.)

A YOKEL (to his lass, on attendant asking for her parcel): "Whaat do he say? Hold your parrysol while we look over the plaace? Don't ee let 'un have it. We may be from the country, but daang it if we ain't oop to the confidence trick!" Funny Folks.

"TRUE FOR YOU."

THE languid hand of fashion now dangles a walking-stick of cork. Mr. O'Bull comments that the finest "Cork" sticks he ever handled were made of blackthorn. Funny Folks.

QUITE ZOO!

WHY would it be indiscreet to offer the elephant at the Zoo one of Mr. Watt's hymns?—Because it's a-verse to it. Funny Folks.

TAILING OFF.

INSTEAD of the "cat-o'-nine-tails," our soldiers have in future to beware but of one tail—the cart's. Funny Folks.

A LAY "FIGURE."—The price of eggs.

Funny Folks.

HUGH M'CHESNEY'S WIFE.

HANDSOME, blasé Hugh McChesney lay swinging in a hammock under the trees that east wide shade over McChesney Place.

He had been back from a two years' sojourn abroad just two days, and was thoroughly enjoying the rest and calm with all the utmost capacity of his idle, languid nature.

Under the shadows of the same tree sat his mother, a stately matron of sixty, the only human being of whom Hugh McChesney had ever stood in fear.

"Hugh," said Mrs. McChesney, "I have invited the Hildreths here for the summer. They will arrive very soon."

"Have you?" responded Hugh, languidly; but his tone did not betray the annoyance his face expressed. He had gone abroad to escape these very Hildreths.

"Yes," continued Mrs. McChesney, "yes, they come to-morrow. I want you to go down to the station every day now till they do come. Mrs. Hildreth is always so particular about having due respect shown her, and I would not offend her for the world."

"How many of them will there be?"

"Three. Mrs. Hildreth; her nieces, who is a young widow—Mrs. Gray is a beauty I am told; and Carrie, who has just passed her twenty-first birthday, and has therefore come into possession of her twenty thousand pounds left her by her father, you know."

"Yes, I know," assented Hugh, wearily. He had heard of that twenty thousand pounds every day for a day. He had been shown a portrait also of the prospective heiress, which had hastened his departure abroad.

"I wonder," he asked, lazily, as he rocked himself lightly in the hammock, "if Miss Carrie has any more flesh on her bones than she used to have."

"Hugh," cried his mother, "I supposed you were a gentleman. I am surprised to hear such an ill-bred remark from you. Miss Carrie is a most estimable girl, and has good breeding, and a kind heart, and—"

"And money," interrupted Hugh, "which covers a multitude of deficiencies in man, a woman always."

"You will have an opportunity to determine before long," answered his mother, "whether money ain't of some use after all. McChesney Place will be under the hammer in less than two years unless something is done to save it, and you and I will be beggars."

She gathered up her work and swept away as she finished, and Hugh covered his eyes with his shapely hand and almost groaned aloud.

"Oh, my God, if she knew!" he murmured. But, mercifully, Mrs. McChesney did not know.

Suddenly a voice broke the silence, trilling a snatch of song:

"I love my love, I love my love,

I love my love, because my love loves me."

This is what the voice sang. The singer came up the orchard path, and was almost within reach of the motionless figure in the hammock before she saw it. Then she started back with a little, smothered cry, and a face grown suddenly crimson. She blushed and paled so easily, did Flossie, the old gardener's young daughter.

"You are very happy this morning, dearie," said Hugh, reaching out his hand to her. "Come here and let me look at you. I have not had a chance for more than a glimpse at your face since I came home. Why, child, where is your flesh gone? You are as slender as a reed; you who were so round and rosy. Have you been ill since I went away?"

"Oh, very ill!"

"They never wrote me of it."

"I was not here. I went away to my sister's—you remember her—she that was Mrs. Tristan's governess. She married and lives in the country. I was with her a long time, resting and recruiting."

All the time Flossie's eyes had been turned away from the eyes of her listener, and the hand he held shook like a leaf in his.

"You are not strong yet, I see," he said,

kindly. "You must take good care of yourself, child, for you are young to die, too young, too fair, too dear."

Again a wave of colour swept over Flossie's sweet face. But just then a voice from the house called to her and she hurried away.

"How changed she is—in some indefinable way," murmured Hugh, as he looked after her. "She seems so much older some way, poor child."

He had known her from her childhood, and had made a pet of her long before he went abroad.

The next day the Hildreths came. Mrs. Hildreth, forty in years and a thousand in society-wisdom and experience, and with one supreme desire in her soul, which was to marry her daughter to Hugh McChesney.

Carrie Hildreth came also, tall, thin, sallow, with pathetic eyes that always seemed pitying her own plainness, which was rendered doubly noticeable by the rich elegance of her toilets and the lustre of her jewels. Twenty-one in years, and looked thirty-five beside the splendid beauty of her cousin, Mrs. Gray.

Had it been possible to put Mrs. Gray out of the way, save by cold-blooded murder, Mrs. Hildreth would certainly have done it before she would have brought her to McChesney Place. But she had invited her niece to spend the season with them before Mrs. McChesney's invitation had been received, and she had been obliged to inform Mrs. McChesney, therefore, of this and to bring Mrs. Gray with her.

Lisle Gray was indeed a rival to be feared. She had that rare combination, blue-black eyes, golden hair, and a brilliant bloom. She had also a warm heart that held all its stores of passion yet untouched, for she had been an old man's darling, and though she had sorrowed for her husband as for a friend and protector it had been no more.

Something new stirred in Hugh McChesney's heart and pulses when Lisle's cool, fair hand first touched his; something that made him restless and afraid to look into her eyes, and therefore he was all to Carrie that Mrs. Hildreth could desire.

He turned Carrie's music at the piano, and listened attentively to her beautiful voice, which was her one solitary charm. All a woman's love and power of feeling and repressed longings were in her voice when she sang. And while Hugh McChesney leaned over her at the piano and listened, she was singing her heart away, hopelessly, she knew; but, alas! she could not hold it back.

It was her doom to love him, and she knew it from that hour. He was so kind to her for days, so thoughtful and attentive, and both her and her mother's heart leaped for joy. Only Mrs. McChesney saw the truth. Once she caught his eyes as they rested on Lisle Gray. She had never seen that look in his face before.

"Was your niece a wife long before she was a widow?" she asked, carelessly, of her friend that night.

"Only a year."

"How very sad."

"No, not sad, for he was an old man, and left her wealth," Mrs. Hildreth answered; and then could have bitten her own tongue off in her rage.

She did not care, you see, to have Mrs. McChesney or Hugh know that Lisle Gray was rich as well as beautiful.

"Well, not exactly wealth," she hastened to add, "but a competence. Enough to dress her and keep her in society. But she is very extravagant. It would require a fortune to support her. Luckily she has a wealthy lover now in India, and I am hoping when he returns she will marry him. But she is a sad coquette—for ever making victims to her beauty."

"Ah!" was Mrs. McChesney's only comment. She knew her friend well, and made due allowance for her statements, and after this she looked at Lisle Gray with renewed interest.

"If she has wealth," she said, mentally, "she is a far more desirable wife for Hugh than Carrie. All the McChesneys for generations have married handsome women."

A day later she was alone with Carrie. Mrs. Hildreth was taking her siesta, Lisle writing letters, and Hugh smoking his cigar.

"How beautiful your cousin is," she remarked. "Like a rare picture."

"Yes," responded Carrie, with a sigh. "I sometimes think I would give all the remainder of my life to be only for one year as beautiful as she is."

"That is extravagant language," said Mrs. McChesney. "One cannot expect to have everything. Some have beauty, some mental gifts, some wealth, some position; few have all."

"But Lisle has," responded Carrie. "She is bright, and good, and beautiful; and her husband added wealth when he died. She has twenty-five thousand in her own right free of incumbrances. But do not mention it. She does not like to have it known."

Strive as he would Hugh McChesney found himself unable to control his real emotions. He was barely courteous to Lisle, and quite attentive to Carrie. Yet Carrie was not deceived.

One night she went to her room and threw herself on her bed in a passion of tears.

"It is no use, no use," she cried. "He loves her. But he is trying to hide it—trying, oh, my God, he is trying to love me. Such a useless effort for any man."

While she wept there Hugh McChesney was in the shrubbery with Lisle Gray's hands for the first time clasped in his. Lisle's face was lifted wonderfully as she listened to his impassioned words.

"I am perhaps mad," he said. "I have no right to love you—only I do. But I am tied—hand and foot—more helplessly, more horribly bound than ever man was before. And now to have this come upon me. This passion, so mighty that it takes hold of nerve and soul and brain, and will not let me rest night or day. I could almost kill myself when I think of it. I have no right to talk to you like this—to talk at all—only that these few words save me from instant insanity. Looking at you here in the moonlight, I knew my brain would go mad if I did not speak."

Then he turned away and left her. Within a woman near the open window had sat and heard all. It was his mother. She smiled, and said to herself:

"It is time he knew."

Outside, another woman had heard also, and had crept off in the shadows of the shrubbery like a wounded deer.

Mrs. McChesney tapped on Hugh's door, but no answer came. She entered. He was lying prone upon his face on a couch, the picture of despair.

"Hugh," she said, tenderly. "I have a bit of news for you which may surprise you. I would far rather have Lisle Gray for my daughter than Carrie Hildreth. Do not fear my displeasure."

He turned and looked at her.

"Then you must have discovered that she too has money," he said, with a touch of scorn in his voice.

"Well, yes, she has money," answered the woman, coolly, "and you love her. She will be an honour to us all, and keep up the reputation for good taste in female beauty which the McChesneys have always had. I hope you will not delay long. End Carrie's suspense and make Lisle happy."

"God help me," he cried.

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing! Only that I would bless the hand that would put a bullet through my brain," he said, and rushed out of the room.

For a week Hugh looked like an insane man. He ate nothing, slept little, and was pale as a corpse.

The ladies pitied him and petted him, and Lisle lost flesh and bloom. She loved him with all her heart, and the mystery of his words and behaviour frightened her.

At night she sat by her window and heard the thud of his horse's hoofs, as he rode off into the darkness alone. He would ride half the night till his weary horse could no longer

keep peace with his mad thoughts, and then come home to toss the remainder of the night in wild dreams.

Ah, it was a wretched household there at McChesney Place. At last Mrs. McChesney grew to believe that some madness had come upon her son.

One night they were all startled by the sudden appearance of the old gardener. He was pale and trembling, and could barely gasp out his errand.

"Flossie is ill—dying," he said, "and she asks for the young master—for Mr. Hugh. Where is he?"

Hugh was summoned, and hastened away with the old gardener to the latter's little cottage just outside the grounds.

"How strange," said Mrs. McChesney, "and yet not strange. Hugh was always so kind to her when she was a child. I have no doubt she feels that he can help her. Her childish faith in him was so great."

But the night went by and Hugh did not return. Mrs. McChesney could not sleep. In the gray dawn Hugh came in, pale, haggard, looking years older.

"How is Flossie?" his mother asked.

"Dead," he answered. "And I am going away for a few days. Make my excuses to the guests. Imperative business calls me."

Two days later he came back. With him came a woman, evidently a servant, and a child, a beautiful, laughing boy a year and a half old.

Into the presence of his mother and guests he bade them come.

"I have a confession to make before you all," he said. "I want you all to know me as I am, a poor, weak, miserable coward. You see this child. Well, it is mine, the child of my wife, who died two days ago. I married her secretly four years ago. I admired her pretty face, and was fond of her as one is fond of a toy, and so I married her. But I dared not confess it to my mother. When I repented of the step I rushed away abroad, and I never knew of this child's existence till night before last, when its mother lay dying. Good God—to think of all she suffered for me! and I killed her. She heard my mad words to another woman a week ago, and they killed her. She felt that she was in the way of my happiness, and she lay down and died like a wounded lamb. And when she knew she was to die she told me of our child, and asked me to care for it. And so I have brought it home, and you have heard the whole miserable story."

"Take the child out of my sight," cried Mrs. McChesney, turning fiercely upon the servant-woman.

"Mother!" cried Hugh.

But she silenced him.

"Do you think I will ever own it or let it bear our name?" she cried. "The miserable, low-born child of a servant. Take it away out of my sight."

The nurse turned to go, but a hand detained her.

"Give the child to me," said a soft voice, and Lisle Gray reached out her arms, and the child laughed and leaped into them.

"I am going away to-morrow," she said, turning with dignity to Mrs. McChesney. "I will take the child with me."

"God bless you," cried Hugh, "but do not go. Oh, if you will do this for my child will you not stay for me?"

She looked into his face there before them all, the child still upon her breast.

"I will come back if you want me," she said, smiling. "But only on condition that your mother will welcome me and this helpless little one. Otherwise you must come to me."

So Lisle went, but in due time Mrs. McChesney thought of the mortgage on McChesney Place, forgetting her wrath, and sent for Mrs. Gray and the child, and even Mrs. Hildreth, when she read the marriage notice, sighed a sigh of relief.

"For, thank fortune," she said, "Lisle can't spoil any more of my plans."

But as for Carrie, ah, well, she hid her hurt as proud women can.



[HIS OWN.]

LEARNED AT LAST.

A SHORT STORY.

(COMPLETE IN THIS NUMBER.)

THE door closed—he was gone. She heard his quick, firm step pass down the corridor, then pause. It was not too late; she might call him back and tell the truth, as Aunt Margaret had counselled her to do as she had believed was her intention when he entered the room. But he would give her no opportunity—she had kept telling herself that during the whole interview!

She would have been obliged to blurt out her confession in plain words, and though Nannie Vane did not wish to be deceitful she liked to soften and sugar unpleasant facts before presenting them to her friends.

Had she better run after him, tell the whole, and be done? She half-rose, then sat down again with a sensation of mingled regret and relief, for Aunt Margaret's high-pitched, cheery voice was heard as she entered, saying:

"I met Mr. Moore. He is perfectly satisfied, which is more than a good many men would have been! But now you see how right I was in insisting on your making a clean breast of matters! There's nothing so dangerous as con-

cealments between engaged people, though you can seldom persuade girls to believe it."

"Dear me, how you always abuse girls—you were one yourself once," returned Nannie, rather pettishly.

"Hallo!" cried Aunt Margaret, walking up to the sofa, and looking sharply at her niece. "If Moore hadn't said he was satisfied I should begin to think you hadn't told him."

"Well, I didn't," said Nannie, and burst out crying.

"Why not?" asked Aunt Margaret, sharply.

"He—he didn't give me a chance," quavered Nannie.

"Courageous people make chances in order to do right," said Aunt Margaret, and her voice sounded pained rather than irate.

This show of sympathy, inconsiderable as it was, subdued Nannie. She wiped her eyes.

"I know I'm not courageous, Aunt Margaret," she said, "but I want to do right—indeed, I do! But I do so hate to be scolded, and I can't bear to distrust anybody I like," Nannie said.

"And your excessive love of approbation has a great deal to do with it also! Nannie, Nannie, an over desire for approval becomes a vice—yes, a vice! That, and what you call hating to be scolded, leads girls into more scrapes than innate wickedness ever does. As for you, you'd never get into trouble but for those weaknesses—it is those make you—well, I hate to say untruthful—"

"No, no, I never told a downright lie in my life, aunty!"

"Well, but you prevaricate—you tell half the truth—you keep silence about things. Child, child, if it were not for those faults you would be as good as anybody need to be; but you could not possess two weaknesses more dangerous. If you do not overcome them you will risk ruining your happiness—worse than that, the happiness of those who love you."

"You are very hard on me, Aunt Margaret, but I suppose I deserve it," sighed Nannie.

"As for Tom Marcy himself—"

"I begged you to write and tell him I was engaged—you know I did," exclaimed Nannie.

"And I insisted on your doing it yourself," replied Aunt Margaret, "but I begin to think now you were not really frank with him. Nannie, did you say outright you were engaged?"

"N—no. It seemed so harsh and brutal," said Nannie. "I'd written him over and over that it was all nonsense—and anyhow, for the last two months, there hasn't been a word in his letters about—about being in love with me."

"I wonder if you know your own mind, Nannie," exclaimed Aunt Margaret. "Do you love Herbert Moore, or do you love Tom?"

"I never loved Tom—not in that way—but when he bothered me so and behaved like a madman what could I do?"

"You engaged yourself to him just to get rid of importunities?"

"Oh, we never were really engaged."

"Come now, call things by their right names for once."

"I've written him over and over that it was nonsense."

"Yes, in a coquettish fashion that meant nothing. Well, you are in a worse box than I thought. You've not only got to tell Moore the truth, but you have got yet to write to Tom."

"Oh, Aunt Margaret, if you would only do that!"

"I will on one condition, Nannie."

"Oh, I'll promise anything you like—anything. I'll tell Herbert," said Nannie. "I'd send for him now and get it over, only he is busy and could not come."

"I'll write a line and tell him he must dine here to-night," said Aunt Margaret.

"Oh—but that cousin of his is coming to-day," sighed Nannie.

"Mr. Hardy? Very well, Moore can bring him—we must make his acquaintance. Nay, not a word. You want an excuse for putting off the promise you have just made—I knew you would find one," she exclaimed, severely.

"I don't—I don't! Write to him, Aunt Margaret—ask him to come," said Nannie, ready to burst into tears again, but clutching desperately at her courage. "I want to tell him and get it over—not—not just to get it over, aunty—but I want to do right!"

"That's my good girl," said Aunt Margaret, kissing her. "Now, Nannie, I'll write to Tom Marcy also, and when Herbert shows me that you have told the exact truth I'll send the letter—I give you my word that you shall have no more trouble."

"You are very good," said Nannie, brightening up. Then in a moment she began to grow frightened, and asked: "Do you think Herbert will be very angry?"

"Not if you tell the exact truth. He will think you a soft-hearted little goose, but he won't mind."

Nannie Vane was as sweet and good as she was pretty with the exception of those two faults Aunt Margaret condemned so sternly. But as the girl was not yet nineteen, her relative hoped she might cure herself of them before they did any serious harm to her character.

To say no when any person begged hard of her to say yes was dreadfully difficult to Nannie; she was not a flirt, though fond of attention; and the men would get in earnest; and twice already only Aunt Margaret's decision had saved her from engaging herself to adorers for whom she did not care a bit.

Tom Marcy was her second cousin, and they had been baby-lovers in the ancient days when

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they played as children in the wood near the beautiful country-seat where Aunt Margaret spent long months each year.

The two grew up; Tom went off to Scotland; and neither he nor Nannie remembered their childish loves except to smile over them till about a year previous to the time of which I am writing, when Tom came home on a visit.

He was a handsome, rattle-brained fellow of five-and-twenty, with plenty of energy and good sense under his follies to make one hopeful for his future; a good business man too, though with more of a fancy for speculation than Aunt Margaret approved.

It was spring when he arrived and joined his relatives at the old country place.

He and Nannie were idle and the weather lovely, and Nannie grown so pretty and bewitching that a little love-making between the young pair seemed as natural as it does for birds to sing.

Tom Marcy was of a very inflammable composition, and decided that he was fathoms deep in love, and at first Nannie almost thought she was herself, but Tom's wanting to be engaged showed her that she had made a mistake.

She tried to hint this fact, but he raved and ranted to such an extent that she was ready to do anything in the world to comfort him, and when his visit ended, and he went back to Scotland, he insisted on calling the terms upon which they stood an engagement, and though Nannie said and wrote afterwards that it was not, she sugared over her negatives so thickly that they sounded like so many affirmatives.

In the autumn she returned to town with Aunt Margaret. The winter passed, and about Lent destiny brought Herbert Moore across Nannie's path.

He was some ten years the girl's senior—a handsome, proud, retiring man, unusually clever, and thoroughly worthy of respect. He fell in love with Nannie at once, and greatly to his own astonishment.

But he did not fling himself at her head, as other men had done, and during that quiet Lenten season Nannie learned for the first time what love really meant.

There was no doubt now—she loved him! When she discovered the truth she was quite shocked with herself. It seemed bold and unmaidenly to care for a man who had only been gentle and kind.

Lent came to an end, and Herbert Moore put his love-story into words, and all Nannie's doubts and reproaches vanished.

Their engagement was now nearly a month old, and the period would have been one of perfect happiness, except for the remembrance of Tom Marcy and the necessity for writing him the whole truth.

Had she written to Tom Marcy? She said she had. But her conscience pricked her, for instead of telling of her engagement she had only given vague hints, and if on one page she dealt a blow to Tom's hopes, it looked so cruel set down in black and white that on the next she had to make amends. This was fulfilling her promise in the letter but breaking it in the spirit.

That afternoon came a beautiful bouquet for Nannie, and a note for Aunt Margaret—both from Herbert Moore.

"Is—is he coming?" asked Nannie, turning away her head to give a little private kiss to the flowers, somehow feeling as if she were doing something to deprecate Herbert's possible anger.

"Oh, yes—very glad to," replied Aunt Margaret, cheerfully. "There is no secret—you can read what he says."

So Nannie read the hasty lines, and began to shiver at what lay before her, wishing she could invent some excuse to put off Herbert's coming. She even began in a roundabout fashion to plead with Aunt Margaret to tell the story for her, but her relative received the hint with such sternness that Nannie dared say no more. Still, in spite of being prim, the spinster was very kind, and petted and encouraged her, and Nannie did her best to keep a stout hold of her faltering courage.

She grew so restless and miserable that, with her usual common sense, Aunt Margaret decided occupation was the best thing to offer, so she brought out her account book, desired Nannie to verify several long rows of figures, and left the girl to herself.

Nannie sat alone in her room, and went through the task. So many disturbing thoughts intruded that she had to add up the lists half-a-dozen times, and sometimes the amounts were a great deal too much, and sometimes too little; but at last they consented to settle into the same numbers as Aunt Margaret had originally written.

By this time Nannie was very tired, and her head threatened to ache, so she took a novel and lay down on the sofa, but discovered presently that she had not read a word—was only wondering if Herbert would be angry, and assuring herself that Tom had always known she did not love him.

But he might be unhappy—and, oh, how silly and wicked her conduct showed—if she had only been honest and truthful. She saw clearly for the first time that compromises are always wrong. If she had done as she ought long before this Tom would have got over his fancy; and as for her own confession to Herbert Moore, why, if she had uttered it in the beginning he might almost have regarded it as a compliment.

When he told his story she could have said frankly that now she knew what love was. She had tried to care for Tom just to please him—she loved Herbert in spite of herself. But she had not been honest; and now Aunt Margaret declared that she was engaged to both men; and she had to confess to Herbert; and he was so proud, and agreed so completely with Aunt Margaret about the cowardice of deception.

And then Nannie began to weep bitterly, and perhaps this was the best thing she could have done, for it stilled her weary nerves, and finally she fell fast asleep and dreamed that Tom had come and told Herbert himself, and laughed over the affair, and they were all happy.

When she woke it was twilight. She sprang up in great haste, thankful that it was so late. She had no time to think. She must dress—oh, perhaps her dream was a good omen—she would believe so.

She lighted the gas and began her toilet. Aunt Margaret's maid usually came to assist thereat, but to-night Nannie did not want her. She arranged her beautiful auburn hair in the fashion Herbert liked. She put on a lovely, soft, creamy, white dress he admired, that was relieved by knots of vivid blue.

She lingered over her dressing, yet all the while oppressed by a sensation of breathless hurry, and as tired as if she had walked ten miles up hill. But she would not yield to her fears, she said. She would tell the truth. As long as she lived she would never again have another concealment—never.

Then there came a knock at the door, and Aunt Margaret entered, saying:

"Oh, you are dressed. I looked in awhile ago, but you were so sound asleep it seemed a pity to wake you. I knew you would have time enough."

"I was so tired after those awful accounts," said Nannie.

Aunt Margaret looked pityingly at her, but Nannie was fastening some flowers in her corsage and did not notice; fluttered and troubled the spinster looked too, but very determined. She was dreadfully sorry for Nannie, but firm in her intention of making this lesson one the girl would never forget, and circumstances had combined to render it more terrible than poor Nannie dreamed possible.

"I've got some news for you," said Aunt Margaret, almost gruffly.

"What—what? No bad news?" cried Nannie, already so nervous that she began to shake like a leaf.

"That's as you take it," said Aunt Margaret.

"Oh! what is it?" demanded Nannie. The door-bell rang a loud peal. "That can't be Herbert already," she exclaimed.

"It isn't Herbert," said Aunt Margaret, "it's—it's Tom Marcy."

Nannie grew white as a ghost and dropped into a chair, staring at her aunt with wide-open, frightened eyes. This was what Tom's silence for the last fortnight had meant. He had understood her last letter. He had come to insist upon his claim.

"I shall die!" groaned Nannie. "I shall die!"

"Child," said Aunt Margaret, "death does not come so readily. When we do wrong we have to live and face the consequences—thankful to God when it is not too late to atone."

"Send him away," cried Nannie. "Send him away."

"Do you think he would go at my bidding?" returned Aunt Margaret.

"Tell him—tell him—"

"Do you think he would accept my telling?" interrupted Aunt Margaret.

"Oh, help me, help me!" pleaded Nannie, past tears, past any convenient feminine weakness which might have given her temporary aid.

"Aunt Margaret, for pity's sake, help me!"

"Nobody can help you—you must help yourself," came the answer, and though Aunt Margaret's features trembled and worked there was no relenting in her voice.

"What can I do—what can I do?" moaned Nannie.

"Tell the truth."

"Oh, aunt, have a little mercy—"

"Child, you have put it out of my power to help you, however much I might wish. No human being can aid you."

"What shall I say?"

"The truth—the truth!"

"Aunt, aunt, go and tell him."

But deaf to the pleading voice Aunt Margaret went on.

"Tell the whole truth—just how your weakness prevented your doing so in season—say that if you must give him great pain it is not because you were deliberately wicked, only weak. He may tell you that to spare him at first, to try gradually to soften the blow, was cruelty—but be honest at last—be honest, whatever comes to him or to you."

Nannie sank back in her chair and covered her face with her hands. Aunt Margaret took that opportunity to wipe her eyes, in which the tears had gathered, but stood firm and unyielding as ever. Presently Nannie lifted her head and said, slowly:

"You are right, Aunt Margaret, I deserve it all. No, I haven't been deliberately wicked, but I have been a weak, miserable coward, and that is more contemptible."

"Even a courageous person may have cowardly moments," replied Aunt Margaret. "At least, remember you had already determined to be brave."

"Yes—I was going to tell Herbert—I should not have faltered, I know I should not."

"So do I. Let that be a little comfort. You won't have to feel that you speak now simply because circumstances force you to. Go and get it over. It won't be so hard as you think. Things are always worse in anticipation. Every second's hesitation is only a useless, voluntary misery. Go, child, go."

Nannie turned without a word and flew downstairs. Aunt Margaret stood lost in meditation. She wiped away a few more tears, but she looked relieved and satisfied through it all.

Fast as Nannie went it seemed to her a long, long time before she reached the drawing-room. But there was no faltering in her mind, no desire to turn back. She wanted to tell the truth, the exact truth, the whole truth. Whatever came she must relieve her soul of the burthen which weighed upon it.

She opened the door and saw Tom Marcy standing in the centre of the apartment. He hurried forward, seized both her hands, and kissed her cheek, crying gaily:

"Taken you by surprise, eh? Good gracious, Nannie, you are prettier than ever. Are you glad to see me? Say you are glad."

"Yes, yes. Of course I am glad," she answered, breathlessly. "Only it is so sud-

den. Why didn't you let us know you were coming?"

"Started off at a moment's notice. Had some important business," said Tom, in his headlong fashion. "There was no time to write. I did think of telegraphing on the road, but I remembered a telegram always frightens Aunt Margaret half to death, so I concluded to appear without warning. I thought you'd be glad to see me. You ARE glad?"

"Yes, yes," was all Nannie could say.

She wondered that Tom did not notice how strangely she behaved. She wished he would, and demand an explanation. But no, he seemed utterly blind to her agitation, though he was regarding her with so much affection and tenderness that his glance sent a sharper pang of anguish to her heart.

He continued eagerly all the while.

"I knew my last letter would somewhat prepare you to expect me before long. What did you think of it, Nannie dear? Rather stole a march on you, eh? Well, well, let's talk it all over comfortably."

"I don't know what you mean," cried Nannie, shivering and shrinking away from his gray laugh. "I haven't had a letter lately. You didn't answer mine."

"Bless me, yes, I did. Why, didn't you get it? Aunt Margaret didn't tell me. You were asleep when I came first. She sent me back to dress and come to dine—"

"Oh, Tom, Tom, I want to tell you something," broke in Nannie.

"Of course you do," returned he, putting his arm round her waist, and so effectually striking her dumb for an instant.

She tried to shrink out of his embrace, but he did not observe it.

"Lots of things, and I you. Oh, you darling little chick. How nice it is to see you again. By Jove, I'm as happy as an emperor!"

"Tom—wait—listen to me. You know what I wrote—you—"

Before she could add another word the street bell rang again a thundering peal—Herbert Moore's ring.

Nannie fairly shrieked. She thought she must faint or die outright. She caught Tom's arm, pleading in a hoarse whisper.

"Come into the next room—quick—I must tell you before you see him—I—"

But the servant had opened the drawing-room door, and Aunt Margaret was saying:

"I don't need any introduction to your cousin, Herbert. You have talked so much about him that I feel I know him already. Very glad to see you, Mr. Hardy. This is a day of cousins. Nannie has one arrived also."

Then Nannie saw the three enter. She knew that Herbert addressed her, that Aunt Margaret presented Mr. Hardy to her and Tom, she saw Herbert and Tom speak as if they had lately met, she felt Aunt Margaret's kindly, protecting touch on her arm, she knew that she herself spoke, but what she said, or what anybody else said, was perfectly unintelligible.

There was only one thought clear in her mind, she had had no time to tell the truth, and now it was too late. Any instant betrayal might overtake her.

Aunt Margaret, seeing Tom so calm and self-possessed, might think she had told. Mr. Hardy might feel it his duty to say something about his pleasure in meeting his future relative, and then Tom would burst out and demand what it all meant.

Oh, then perhaps the two men would quarrel before her face, each claiming her. No, Herbert would throw her off, he would turn on his heel and leave her to her misery and remorse, and Tom would hate her too—oh, she should die—no, she should go mad.

Some wild idea of rushing out of the room and hiding herself crossed her mind, but it was impossible. Her dazed brain could invent no excuse. She must wait. The exposure would come in a moment or two—and then, then—

She found herself seated on a sofa and Mr. Hardy beside her. How she got there she did not know.

Aunt Margaret sat near the fire, Tom was

bending over her chair, Moore was leaning his arm on the mantel, joining in their conversation, though his eyes were fixed on her, lovingly.

And they were all talking and laughing, Mr. Hardy's monotonous voice buzzing in her ear. She heard herself say yes and no mechanically, but what she meant she had not the least idea. Oh, it seemed a whole year that this intolerable scene had gone on.

She could not endure it—she could not! Better hasten to the catastrophe. She longed to rise and shriek the truth in their ears. But she could not. She could not stir.

At last the dining-room door opened. Dinner was announced, and Aunt Margaret rose, saying:

"Mr. Hardy, I shall resign you to my niece. I must take care of these two bad boys, else they will get into mischief."

In a moment more they were at table. Mr. Hardy was talking—oh, those slow, sententious tones—how they irritated her—and he wore a wig, and it did not fit well—and Tom and Herbert were smiling at her—she wondered nobody noticed how she looked!

She thought she must be pale as death, have turned withered and gray and old, but the truth was her eyes were blazing with excitement, her cheeks were scarlet, she looked so much handsomer than usual even that the three who knew her best were thinking they had never fully appreciated her beauty.

And now it seemed as if they had been at least two years at the table. It seemed as if they should sit there for ever.

For ever, unless, indeed, some careless word betrayed her secret, and set Tom and Herbert by the ears, or else caused them both to turn upon her with anger and contempt.

Her bewilderment increased. Nothing was tangible but her misery! Everybody talking—laughing—she too; Tom telling an amusing anecdote of his journey, she herself relating some absurd thing, all eyes upon her, the lights dancing before her eyes!

Then suddenly all this agitation died, and left her icy cold and despairing. The climax was coming. Aunt Margaret was bringing it on. Nannie heard her say:

"Now the servants are gone I shall give a toast. We are quite en famille. If it is necessary to blush Mr. Hardy and I will do it, and save you young folks the trouble."

"Remember how modest I am, aunt," Tom interposed.

Herbert smiles at her, Nannie, across the table.

It was coming. Let it! She was past caring now. The world had come to an end—she had lost everything!

"But I shall have to give two toasts, else you'll be obliged to drink your own healths," said Aunt Margaret, "you modest young people! You, Tom Marcy, stop looking so ridiculously happy!"

"I won't!" said Tom.

"And that Herbert Moore is just as bad," cried aunt.

"I'm worse, and I mean to be," cried Herbert.

"These impertinent creatures won't let you speak, Miss Anson," added Mr. Hardy. "Now your first toast."

"Well, here is long life and happiness to Tom Marcy and his Caledonian Kitty, and—"

But just then poor Nannie's head sank on Mr. Hardy's shoulder, and with one low gasp for breath she fainted completely away.

When she came to her senses she was lying on a sofa in the little study back of the dining-room, and Herbert's arms were about her, and Aunt Margaret was holding a bottle of hartshorn to her nose.

She started up and pushed them both away. But Herbert held her fast, saying:

"Lie still, darling. Don't try to get up yet! It was the heat, I suppose. The room was too warm. How you frightened us. But you are all right now. Drink some of this water!"

"Aunt, aunt," moaned Nannie, "tell him—tell him—all—"

"Why, you wicked mouse," laughed Herbert. "Do you want me to think you object to Tom's marrying his Kitty? He hadn't time to tell you the story. He saved her life—and it was all as romantic as possible."

But Nannie was past understanding.

"I meant to speak the truth," she cried, "and now it is too late!"

"I told him," said Aunt Margaret, softly. Then she went out of the room.

"Are—are you angry, Herbert?" shivered Nannie.

But he was not. In fact he thought Aunt Margaret had been rather too hard upon Nannie. She might have put the girl out of her misery by revealing the fact that Tom knew she never really loved him, and that, meantime, he had found consolation in the affection of a girl more appreciative.

Aunt Margaret's surgery was well meant, but had been too severe. But Nannie had no mind to blame her aunt, and she put her whole soul into the promise exchanged between her and Herbert before they went back to the others never to allow any half-truths to cast a shadow between them again.

"Never, never, at any cost," said Herbert.

"Never," repeated Nannie. "Oh, I've learned at last it isn't the telling that costs—it is the keeping back!"

FAT WIVES.

THE people in portions of Africa have many curious customs and superstitions, and among the former may be mentioned the fashion of having fat wives. Being introduced to a great chief's wife, Speke thus describes her:—

"I was struck with the extraordinary dimensions yet pleasing beauty of the immoderately fat fair one. She could not rise, and so large were her arms that the flesh between the joints hung down like large, loose, stuffed puddings. The chief, pointing to his wife said:

"This is the product of our milk-pots; from early youth upwards we keep these pots to their mouths, as it is the fashion at court to have very fat wives."

A sister-in-law of the king was a perfect wonder of hypertrophy. She was unable to stand except on all-fours. Speke unblushingly requested permission to measure her. This is the result:

"Round the arm, twenty-three inches; chest, fifty-two inches; thigh, thirty-one inches; calf, twenty inches; height, five feet eight inches. All of these are exact except the height, and I believe I could have obtained this more accurately if I could have laid her on the floor. Not knowing what difficulties I should have to contend with in such a piece of engineering, I tried to get her height by raising her up. This, after infinite exertions on the part of us both, was accomplished, when she sank down again fainting, for the blood had rushed into her head. Meanwhile, the daughter had sat before us sucking at a milk-pot, on which the father kept her at work by holding the rod in his hand; for, as fattening is the first duty of fashionable female life, it must be duly enforced by the rod, if necessary."

THE CARE OF THE EAR.—Only the softest material and the gentlest pressure should be used in cleaning the ear. In a recent clinical lecture Dr. Wilson gives, in popular form, some very useful and practical information touching the removal of ear-wax. If the ticking of a watch can be heard at a distance of twenty-eight inches, the hearing is good. Each ear should be tested by the watch separately. Noises in the head, sometimes ringing, frequently are due to hardened wax in the ear. Sudden deafness is sometimes caused as follows: "A small mass of wax, from ill-health or uncleanness, becomes hard. A continued secretion of the wax then blocks up the ear-tube still more. An injudicious attempt is then made to remove the wax by

introducing a penholder, down the panum; or swallowing the membranes, ensues, be vibrates. cases, especially what diffidence, hearing for removal are half a in an ounce of a bit of to a suita compacted quite war

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introducing, perhaps, a match-end, a pinhead, or penholder, which, instead of removing, pushes down the wax and packs it against the tympanum; or by sudden draught, or the act of swallowing, the wax is suddenly pressed upon the membrane, and loss of hearing immediately ensues, because the membrane can no longer vibrate. The removal of the wax is in some cases, especially those of long standing, somewhat difficult; but, with gentle treatment and patience, it may be finally accomplished and the hearing fully restored. The best ordinary means for removing wax, when not badly compacted, are half a drachm of sodium carbonate dissolved in an ounce of water, applied lightly, by means of a bit of absorbent cotton or sponge attached to a suitable handle. When the wax is much compacted it may be softened by means of water, quite warm, and a syringe.

STATISTICS.

OUR COMMERCIAL STEAM FLEET.—If the statistics of our commercial steam fleet are of value as a test it would seem that we are more than ever becoming the carriers of the world's trade. Since January 1 (four months) seventy-eight ships, with a burden of 118,000 tons, have been launched, and on April 1 there were about 800,000 tons in progress. The vast emigration to America and the return cargoes of food stuffs and live stock have no doubt much to do with this remarkable growth. New ships fetch full prices, and most of the chief building-yards are full of orders for some time to come.

FEMALE LABOUR IN LONDON.—According to the last Census there were in London 226,000 domestic servants, 16,000 schoolmistresses, teachers, and governesses, 5,100 bookbinders, 4,500 artificial flower makers, 58,500 milliners and dressmakers, 14,800 tailoresses, 26,800 shirt-makers and seamstresses, 4,800 bootmakers, 10,800 sewing-machine workers, and 44,000 laundry women.

CONTINUOUS BRAKES.—A Parliamentary return has been printed, showing that the total amount of railway stock fitted with continuous brakes to December 31, 1880, is as follows:—Engines, 1,645, or 33 per cent.; carriages, 17,654, or 41 per cent.; 3,364 engines remain unfitted with continuous brakes, and 25,738 carriages. A number of the brakes comply only in part with the conditions specified in the circular of the Board of Trade of August 30, 1877.

ACCORDING to the quarterly return of the Registrar-General, in the United Kingdom the births of 288,168 children and the deaths of 188,603 persons were registered in the three months ending March 31. The recorded natural increase of population was thus 99,565. The registered number of persons married in the quarter ending December 31, 1880, was 187,168. The resident population of the United Kingdom in the middle of 1881 is estimated at 34,788,814; of England and Wales 25,798,922; of Scotland 3,695,456; of Ireland 5,294,436.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

ROAST LAMB.—Put the meat in the dripping-pan with a little hot water in the bottom. Sprinkle with salt and a little pepper. Baste often, and allow eight or nine minutes to a pound. When done take the grease off the gravy, make it bubble on top of the stove, and make a thickening of browned flour.

POULET A LA CREME.—This is a dainty dish for an invalid. Boil a chicken, chop or pound the flesh to a paste, rub it through a wire sieve, mix with a little cream and two or three eggs, season with pepper and salt, put in a mould, steam, and serve hot.

BAKED POTATOES.—Parboil, peel, and lay in a dripping-pan, with a bit of butter for each; as they brown put on each a teaspoonful of warm milk, mixed with butter, salt, and pepper. They

should be of a light brown. Butter again just before you dish them.

CUSTARD PIE.—Four eggs, one quart of milk, four tablespoonfuls of white sugar. Flavour with extract of vanilla or lemon; beat the yolks and sugar light, and mix with the milk; flavour, whip in the whites, which should be already a stiff froth, mix well, and pour into shells; grate nutmeg upon the top. Bake this as a cup-custard, or a custard-pudding, in cups, or a deep dish set in a pan of boiling water.

SHE AND I.

We had a little quarrel,
She and I;
We thought to mend our quarrel
By-and-bye;
But we made such long delay
The forgiving word to say,
That we drifted far away,
She and I.

We had been friends together,
She and I,
Through clear and cloudy weather,
She and I;
Our friendship we'd declared,
Our cares and comforts shared,
And most pleasantly had fared,
She and I.

No evil genius dreading,
She and I
Spoke freely of our wedding
By-and-bye;
And talked, as lovers do,
Of a cosy nest for two;
Such a home we had in view,
She and I.

We met and were light-hearted,
She and I;
But sorrowfully parted,
She and I;
And though bitter the regret
At the broken amulet,
We have never spoken yet,
She or I.

They say I'm rather mulish;
That may be;
And I was young and foolish—
So was she;
'Twas a quarrel most absurd,
And I can't recall a word,
And just how the breach occurred
Puzzles me.

We had a foolish quarrel,
She and I,
That furnishes a moral—
Who'll deny?
So if anyone offends
Let him haste to make amends;
If he waits he'll have no friends
By-and-bye.

MISCELLANEOUS.

It is stated that Mr. Fawcett intends to make an experiment in the General Post Office, which will be watched with great interest by the public. He has decided to give employment to a number of deaf and dumb persons in the department devoted to the sorting of newspapers.

An interment took place at Sheffield on the 2nd inst. of the remains of a deaf mute, and the twelve mourners were also deaf and dumb. The service was conducted entirely by sign.

ARRANGEMENTS are being made for the laying of a new independent telegraph cable between a point near Land's End and America.

At a recent meeting of the National Rifle Association Lord Elcho read a letter from Mr. Mullens, of Lombard-street, wherein that gentle-

man offered the Council of the Association a cheque for £2,500, to found a prize to encourage shooting at moving targets at unascertained distances. This handsome offer was at once accepted.

A LADY appeared the other night in a box of the Lyceum Theatre enveloped in a white satin ulster with cuffs and collar of white velvet.

THE death is recorded of Count Léon, who pretended to be a son of Napoleon I., to whom he bore a wonderful likeness. His lawsuits and duels have been much spoken of.

A DECORATIVE Art Exhibition is to be opened in the course of this month in extensive new galleries at 103, New Bond Street, London. The list of patrons is headed by the Princess Louise.

THE lords of creation do not see why women should have a monopoly of bright colours, and green coats, grey trousers, and blue embroidered waistcoats with silver buttons are spoken of as likely to be the approved garb for fashionable mankind during the coming season.

HAIRDRESSING is to be entirely revolutionised before long, and foreheads are to be as carefully shown as they have hitherto been studiously hidden. Frizzy locks and baby curls will become things of the past, and smooth bandeaux and hair combed back from the face will be once more in favour.

THERE are few occasions when ceremony may not be dispensed with; kindness, never.

RECENTLY in Paris a little girl ten years old was run over near the Bastille by an omnibus. She was carried to a neighbouring pharmacy. The policeman who hastened to the place, and was taking out his book to make note of the accident, suddenly fainted. The victim was his daughter. She recognised her father, smiled, and said, "Adieu, mon père," and died.

THE Russian press report the following curious fact relating to Nicholas Rubinstein, the brother of the famous pianist, who died recently at Paris. As is known, his body was taken to Moscow, and there buried with great pomp. Now it turns out that the body sent on to Moscow was that of a Russian baroness, who died at the same time in Paris, and was sent off by the same train for Riga. It appears that at Berlin the respective coffins of Rubinstein and the baroness were confounded, and that now Rubinstein lies at Riga, while the baroness occupies his place at Moscow.

UNHAPPY is the man for whom his own mother has not made all other mothers venerable.

A PECULIARLY interesting exhibition, and one which will have great attractions for ladies, is to be held at Keszmark, in Hungary, and the time selected—July 15 to 17—will probably decide many as to the direction of the customary summer emigration. The Linen Exhibition and Fair is to consist of textile fabrics, machinery for preparation of flax, weaving machinery and appliances, and books relating to the preparation of the raw material and the manufacture of linen in all its varieties. An opportunity will thus be afforded for our native cambrics and lawn and the linen for which the Emerald Isle is famous being put in competition with the produce of the Continent. Specimens of cunning embroidery may be expected to form a feature of the show.

BURIAL PLACES OF PRIME MINISTERS.—Of the Prime Ministers who have ruled in Downing Street during the present century three only lie buried in Westminster Abbey, namely, William Pitt, George Canning, and Lord Palmerston. Lord Sidmouth rests at Mortlake, Lord Grenville at Wotton, in Buckinghamshire, the Duke of Portland in the churchyard of St. Marylebone, Mr. Spencer Perceval at Charlton, in Kent, Lord Liverpool at Hawkesbury, in Gloucestershire, Lord Ripon at Norton, in Lincolnshire, the Duke of Wellington in St. Paul's Cathedral, Lord Grey at Howick, Northumberland, Lord Melbourne at Hatfield, in Hertfordshire, Sir Robert Peel at Drayton, in Staffordshire, Lord Russell at Chenies, in Buckinghamshire, Lord Aberdeen at Great Stanmore, Middlesex, Lord Derby at Knowsley, and now, lastly, Lord Beaconsfield at Hughenden, in Buckinghamshire.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

OUR CORRESPONDENTS should in all cases furnish us with their names and addresses. Letters signed simply with initials or a nom de plume may not always receive immediate attention, as our space is limited. No charge is made under any circumstances for advertisements appearing on this page.

D. D. R.—The time required for the complete circulation of the blood through the human system is fifteen to twenty-five seconds.

M. F. M.—Raisins are dried grapes, the best varieties being the Malaga, muscatel or "sun raisins." These are dried upon the vines, the stem to each bunch when ripe being twisted or partly severed. The grapes soon shrivel by the evaporation of the water they contain, and become sweeter by the concentration of pulp. The common kinds of raisins are prepared by drying the ripe grapes, after they are picked, either in the sun or in heated rooms, and while they are drying dipping them in a lye of wood-ashes and barilla, to every four gallons of which is added a pint of oil and a handful of salt. This causes the saccharine matter to exude and form a coating of thin varnish.

E. A. K. M. A.—1. Your father has the right to receive the share of rent which once belonged to your mother, now deceased—your brother can have no legal claim to it unless your father should give or will it to him or die intestate, in which latter case he would inherit only a portion. Even if the son possessed it in his own right the father would be the proper guardian of it until the son came of age. 2. When the property is disposed of the share originally belonging to your mother devolves upon your father. 3. The wife claims the whole of the money in such a case—the children share it in the second instance.

G. R.—Latin was formerly the language of the Roman republic and empire, and was spoken over the entire Italian peninsula. It ceased to be a living tongue about the eighth century of our era, but continued in use as the language of the church, of law, and of learning generally until within the last two centuries. Good Latin scholars can readily carry on a conversation in that language. As a considerable portion of the service in the Roman Catholic church is in Latin, it is necessary that the priests should be good Latin scholars.

ADVERB—"Too" is correct in both cases, meaning likewise, also. To "come to" would signify to recover.

NELLIE N.—A husband ought to and generally does respect the expressed wishes of the wife respecting the disposal of such articles, but they nevertheless belong to him and can be retained by him if he chooses to exercise his right.

E. M.—Gobelin Tapestry was so called from a noted house in Paris, formerly possessed by famous wool-dyers. The tapestry, called Gobelins, who lived in the reign of Francis I., is said to have found out the secret of dyeing scarlet, which was from him called the scarlet of the Gobelins; the house and the river beside it took the same name. This house was purchased by Louis XIV. as a manufactory of all kinds of curious works for adorning the royal palaces, under the direction of Colbert, especially tapestry, designs of which were drawn by the celebrated Le Brun, by appointment of the King, in 1665.

B. T.—The great bell of Moscow is called by the Russians the "Czar Kolokol," which means the "King of Bells." It is 19 feet 3 inches high, 23 feet in diameter, largest circumference 60 feet 9 inches, weighs 443,772 pounds, and is the largest bell in the world. In 1735 it was cast by order of the Empress Anne, from metal of another large bell, designated the "Giant," which was broken in fragments by falling from its support during a fire in 1706. The "King of Bells" bears considerable ornamentation on its sides, one of the figures representing the empress in flowing robes. It was originally suspended from beams, which were destroyed by fire in 1737, causing the bell to fall to the ground and break a piece from its side. Since that time it has been dumb. In 1837 the Emperor Nicholas had it raised and placed upon a low circular granite wall in the Kremlin, a citadel of Moscow. It is used as a chapel, the fractured opening at the side being the door, which is large enough to permit the entrance of two men abreast.

NOTICE.

IN OUR NEXT NUMBER will be commenced A NEW SERIAL STORY of Great Interest, by a Favourite Author, under the title of
HER BITTER FOE.

IVY and LAURA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-four. Ivy is tall, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of dancing. Laura is medium height, of a loving disposition, fond of home.

BREAD BARGE, DUFF BAG, SPUD NET, and TIN DISH, four seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with four young ladies. Bread Barge is twenty-one, tall, fair, blue eyes, fond of music and dancing. Duff Bag is twenty-two, medium height, brown eyes. Spud Net is nineteen, tall, dark, good-looking, fond of home and children. Tin Dish is eighteen, medium height, fair, good-looking, fond of music and dancing.

CLANWILLIAM, twenty-four, medium height, fair, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young lady about nineteen or twenty.

LUSE and POLLY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young tradesmen. Luse is twenty-three, medium height, fair, fond of home. Polly is twenty-one, tall, dark.

HARRY and BETSY, two friends, would like to correspond with two tradesmen with a view to matrimony. Harry is twenty-three, tall, brown hair, grey eyes. Betsy is twenty, medium height, brown hair, blue eyes.

APART.

Ah, me! the graves that will not fold
Their generous mantles o'er the dead,
But with remorseless fingers hold
The frames whence being long hath fled.

Yet still, with steps that faltering go,
Our ways among them we must take,
Haply, if tears that scalding flow,
May bathe the weary hearts that break.

How hard to watch the changeable eyes,
Through years of solitary pain,
With love, that lifts her ceaseless cries;
To wait and pray—and watch in vain!

To touch the hands, nor feel a thrill
Of answer through the pulses steal;
To know dumb Silence watches still
The bosom that will not unsual.

Oh, God! in other plans than these
Shall sovereign hands the shadows bend,
And souls that holy morning frees,
Find recognition in the end?

DARKIE, SWEET WILLIAM and BOB, three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Darkie is twenty-three, medium height, dark. Sweet William is twenty-four, fair, of a loving disposition, fond of home. Bob is twenty-two, tall, fair, fond of home and children. Respondents must be between twenty and twenty-four.

LILLY and FORGET-ME-NOT, two friends, would like to correspond with two tall young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lilly is twenty-five, medium height, brown hair, grey eyes. Forget-me-not is twenty, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, of a loving disposition.

W. D., thirty-four, medium height, would like to correspond with a domestic servant with a view to matrimony.

MAUD, twenty, medium height, dark, good-looking, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age with a view to matrimony.

MARIAN and MAOMI, two sisters, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about twenty-five. Marian is twenty-one, tall, dark, fond of home and music. Maomi is eighteen, medium height, dark, fond of home and music.

KATE and JULIA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Kate is nineteen, medium height, fair. Julia is nineteen, tall, dark.

GRACE, LOU and EMMIE, three friends, would like to correspond with three young gentlemen about seventeen.

VIOLET, GERTRUDE and ALICE, three friends, would like to correspond with three dark young gentlemen. Violet is nineteen, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and music. Gertrude is seventeen, dark hair and eyes, fond of home and music. Alice is seventeen, medium height, golden hair, blue eyes, fond of home and dancing.

BOB, twenty-two, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty with a view to matrimony.

MOTHER HUBBARD and FRIEND would like to correspond with two seamen in the Royal Navy, between twenty-four and twenty-eight.

PRECIOUS GEM, DEAD RIVET and CLINCHO, three seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with three young ladies with a view to matrimony. Precious Gem is fair, good-looking. Dead Rivet is tall, dark, good-looking. Clincho is tall, dark. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-two, fair, good-looking.

RICHARD and DICK, two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony.

MAT BLOSSOM and WILD ROSE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen about eighteen and twenty. May Blossom is nineteen, tall, dark, fond of home and children. Wild Rose is sixteen, tall, dark, fond of music.

LOVELY LIZZIE, twenty-two, brown hair, hazel eyes, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a dark young gentleman.

LEONE and ADA, two friends, would like to correspond with two good-looking young gentlemen about twenty-one. Leone is nineteen, tall, dark. Ada is nineteen, medium height, fair.

DAISY, twenty, tall, brown hair, blue eyes, would like to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

LAUGHING WILLIAM is responded to by—Annie W., tall, fair, good-looking.

MIDSHIPMAN EAST by—Sancy Nell.

RATTLESN THE REEFER by—Loving Clara.

MAY by—Testtube Tom.

ROSE by—Engine Sam.

LILLIE by—Pipe Jack.

EMILY A. B. by—A. S., nineteen, fond of dancing.

ANNIE by—Loving Dick, tall, dark, fond of home and children.

Albert by—Isabella.

ANNIE by—Loving Dick, tall, dark, fond of home and children.

KATE by—Pretty Harry, medium height, dark, fond of home and children.

LOTTIE by—Saucy Alf, tall, hazel eyes, fond of home and children.

MAUD by—Anglo Saxon Norman, twenty-eight, tall, good-looking.

CHEERY by—Fred Lively, twenty-one, medium height.

HARRY by—A. H., twenty-two, medium height, dark, fond of home and children.

LOVELY by—A. B., fifty-five, tall.

POLLY by—Swab Ringer, tall, good-looking, fond of home and music.

JENNY by—Ring Out, short, good-looking.

NELLIE by—Dry Up, short, brown hair, blue eyes.

MARK SEVEN by—twenty-four, good-looking, fond of home.

DEEP TWELVE by—Jessie, nineteen, good-looking.

UNION JACK BILL by—J. C.

WHITE ENSIGN JACK by—J. H.

HAPPY MAY by—E. E. H.

GUARDSMAN by—Little Julline.

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London: Published for the Proprietors at 331, Strand, by
A. SMITH & Co.